Commentary

Volume Sixty-one, Number Six, June 1976

The Soviet-Egyptian "Rift"

Uri Ra'anan

AN ANSWER TO LILLIAN HELLMAN Nathan Glazer

AMERICAN JEWISH WRITING, ACT II Ruth R. Wisse

DEMOCRACY ACCORDING TO WHITMAN Alfred Kazin

FEAR — A STORY Saral Teilhet-Waldorf

MUMFORD'S UTOPIA Roger Starr

MUSIC

Richard Strauss & His Critics

SAMUEL LIPMAN

THEATER

"The Old Glory" Reconsidered

PETER SHAW

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Amos Elon
Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Robert Alter
Edward Rothstein
Elaine Hoffman Baruch
William Petersen

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by Allen Mac Kenzie

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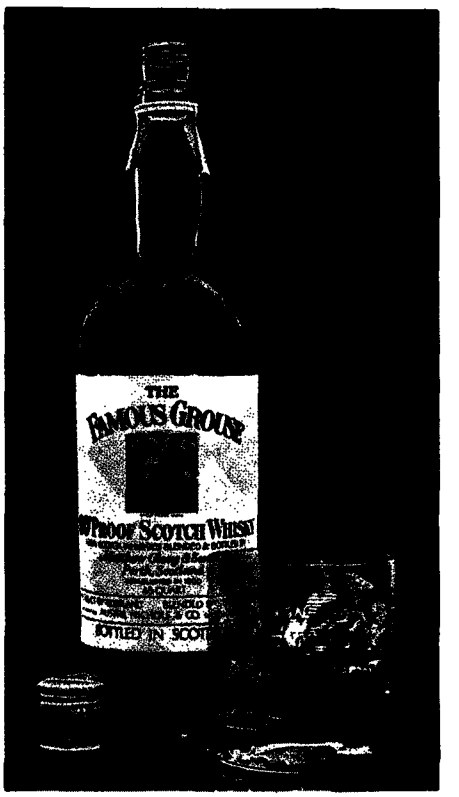

on the rocks. The ultimate experiment requires that you pour a portion of *Famous Grouse* over ice and submit the decision to your palate. In the words of the great bard, Robert Burns:

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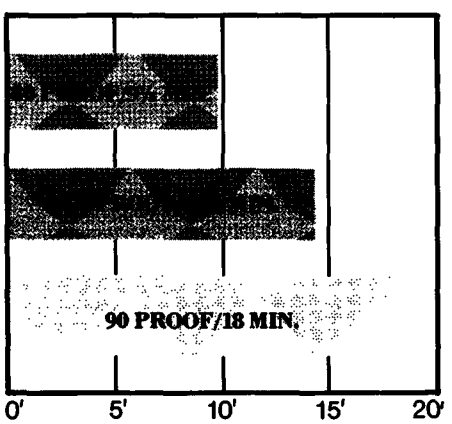
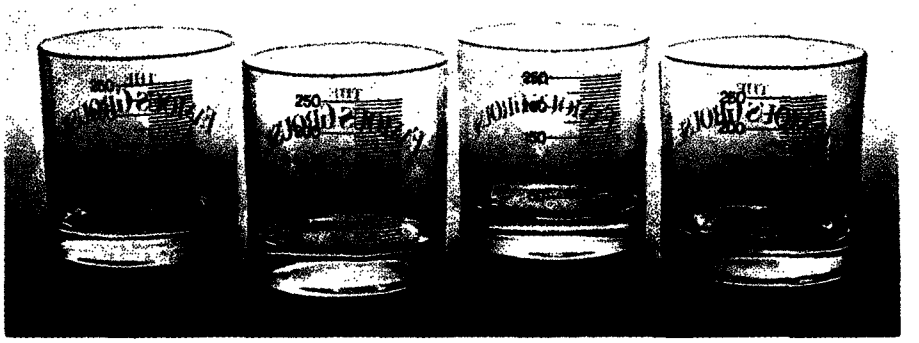


TIME IT TAKES THREE DIFFERENT SCOTCHES TO DILUTE TO 45 PROOF WHEN POURED OVER ICE (IN MINUTES.)



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As essential as profits are to the survival of our way of life, I know of few subjects so universally misunderstood. And a recent nationwide survey indicated that misconceptions about profits are increasing. Obviously, business is not getting the message through. The time is long overdue for some old-fashioned plain talk.

By putting profits to work, companies build new factories, modernize existing facilities, enable Americans to compete with manufacturers abroad and—most critical—create jobs for our people and opportunities for future generations. The company that doesn't make a consistent profit year in and year out withers and disappears, and so do the jobs of its employees.

Most experts agree that our economy will need at least $4 trillion in new capital during the next 10 years. Unless we plan to convert to socialism—and we certainly don't want to do that—a good part of it will have to come from corporate profits. Yet, contrary to what most Americans think, corporate profits have been shrinking. Today, the rate of profit by U.S. corporations is about 5% on sales, less than it was a decade ago. If profitability continues to shrink, we can look forward to an era of diminished economic growth and fewer jobs.

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During the next few months we will be talking publicly about corporate profits because we are convinced that an understanding of this subject by our people is vital to protect America's quality of life. We invite you to read these messages and to let us know how you feel about our viewpoint.

John T. Connor
Chairman

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Commentary

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.00, $20 a year; 3 years $54; 5 years $80—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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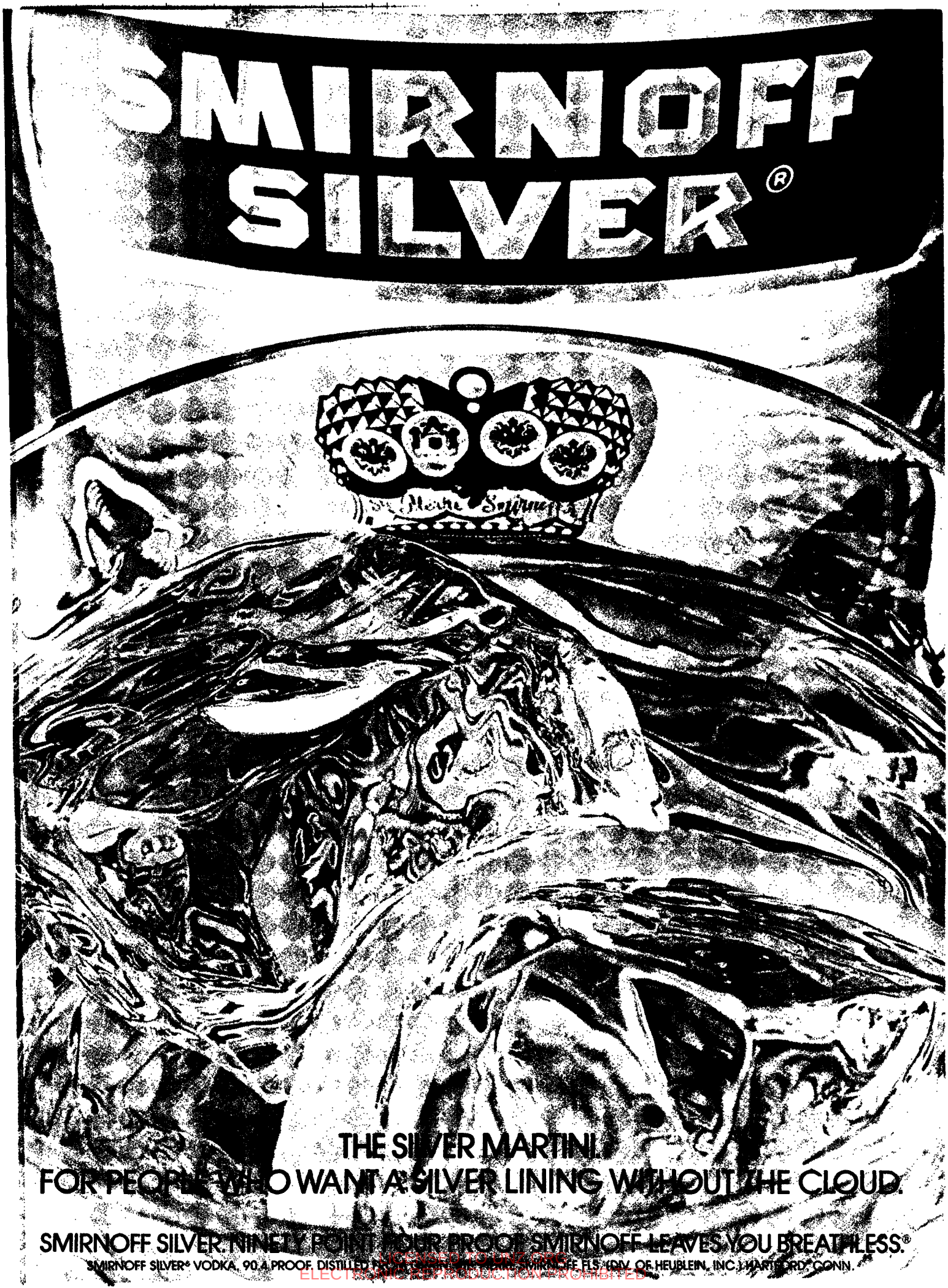
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Letters from Readers

Capitalists & Communists

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Tocqueville once wrote: "Astonishment has often been expressed at this singular blindness of the upper classes of the old regime and the way they compassed their own downfall." I was reminded of Tocqueville when I read Peter L. Berger's admirable analysis ["The Greening of American Foreign Policy," March] of American industry's disillusion with American power, its preference for "stable dictatorships over unstable democracies." The "suicidal mania of American business," as James Burnham once described it, is a continuing pattern duplicated in pre-Hitler Germany and pre-war France. Ernest T. Weir, the open-shop steelmaster of West Virginia, was Radio Moscow's favorite spokesman because he described UN resistance to the invasion of South Korea as "Truman's war," and he wasn't the only American businessman to take this position. In fact, nothing seems to have changed very much from Tocqueville to Berger. I imagine that Tocqueville would find ample confirmation of his view of the upper classes in the present attitude of American banking and business to Communist China. For example, after a mere ten days in China with five other Chase Manhattan executives, David Rockefeller wrote that "the social experiment in China under Chairman Mao's leadership is one of the most important and successful in human history . . . whatever the price of the Chinese Revolution, it has obviously succeeded"—not only, horrors, in economic terms, but also in "fostering high morale and community of purpose." How like the famous *Life* magazine issue of March 29, 1943, which said: "When we take into account what the USSR has accomplished in twenty years of its existence, we can make allowances for certain shortcomings, however deplorable. . . . If the Soviet leaders tell us that the control of information was necessary to get this job done, we can afford to take their word for it."

We might also recall the great Waldorf-Astoria dinner given as a farewell to Soviet Ambassador Litvinov in 1933 and attended by such prominent capitalists as Alfred P. Sloan, Gerard Swope, and Owen D. Young. The high point of the evening came when the guests stood and faced a stage behind which hung a huge American flag and the Red Flag with the hammer and sickle while the organ played, first, "My Country 'tis of Thee" and then the "Internationale."

A *Fortune* magazine poll conducted by Elmo Roper in 1943 reported that of various U.S. population groups, the one categorized as "executives" had the greatest confidence in Soviet postwar intentions, 48 per cent, while only 31 per cent of the entire population was of the same belief.

A few months ago, AFL-CIO President George Meany testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In his testimony, he listed half-a-dozen examples of how American business and banking interests have become close economic partners of the Soviet Union. "American capitalists," said Meany, "were rabid anti-Communists only so long as they saw Communism as a threat to their business interests —not because they were so concerned with democracy and freedom. . . . Now that they see they can make a few bucks dealing with the commissars, they've changed their tune." He cited business deals, in existence or pending, between the Soviet Union and such firms as International Harvester, Control Data, GM, duPont, IBM, and Allis Chalmers as confirmation of his argument.

I am glad that Mr. Berger has singled out "the present leadership of American labor" as one of the few opponents of the powerful intellectual-industrial-banking complex which plays such a dominant role in formulating and supporting American foreign policy. In its unyielding opposition to the USSR and in its perception of "a connection between American power and freedom," the AFL-CIO is a far cry from the Western European labor movements. It is a measure of the difference between them that the AFL-CIO honored itself by inviting as its guest of honor Alexander Solzhenitsyn, while the British TUC invited as its honored guest Alexander Shelepin, the erstwhile Soviet labor boss and secret-police chief.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

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Heidegger

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Homeless in the World" by William Barrett [March] contains some illuminating remarks about Heidegger's thought, but the author's cavalier dismissal of the "Nazi episode" in Heidegger's life is most charitably described as distressing. It is also calculated to cause distress to Jewish readers of a Jewish magazine.

Mr. Barrett's inadequate excuse for devoting but two paragraphs to the "Nazi episode" is that he is concerned not with Heidegger's life but his thought. Such a distinction is at best tenuous in the case of an author whose thought centers on the specifics of the individual's *life*; one has only to think of Heidegger's emphasis on resoluteness, authenticity, choice. Moreover the Nazi episode of Heidegger's *life* is reflected in Heidegger's *thought*. Mr. Barrett has nothing to say about Heidegger's *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* ("The Self-Determination of the German University"). That is a speech, a printed speech, a part of Heidegger's *thought*. By what right does Mr. Barrett ignore it?

Most problematic of all is Mr. Barrett's apparent certainty that Heidegger's Nazism is an *episode*, an incident of the past. He thereby wittingly or unwittingly fails even to hint that there is weighty evidence to the effect that Heidegger's Nazism is more, much more, than an episode. One example must suffice. Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* dates from lectures of 1935, a good year for Nazis and a bad year for Jews. The author reissued the book in 1953 "without change of content" except for *having removed the errors*. That book speaks of the inner truth and greatness of the National Socialist movement. Heidegger is too careful a writer to be excused on the ground of carelessness. Evidently he still believed in 1953 that his remarks about National Socialism did not constitute an error. It is, therefore, to put it bluntly, irresponsible to treat Heidegger's Nazism as a mere episode. Mr. Barrett owes us an explanation. In the meantime I would refer the reader to Stanley Rosen's *Nihilism* (Yale University Press, 1969) for a more balanced and profound treatment of this subject.

I write as an admirer of Heidegger's thought and as an admirer of William Barrett's contributions to COMMENTARY. However, I also write as one who thinks nothing is gained and much is lost when one denies that a good thinker can be a bad man. That is easy to do, but also reprehensible.

WERNER J. DANNHAUSER
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William Barrett's remarkable prose in "Homeless in the World" succeeds where one might have expected only serious poetry or prophecy could. The painstaking resuscitation of themes like God and existence by a secular philosopher, employing only the language and contexts of his day, would seem something of a miracle by itself. It is hard to imagine how any of the social reconstructions required in our time could seriously be undertaken without guidance from Mr. Barrett's grasp of alienation, especially his prophetic warning on the real meaning of utopia.

HENRY DE CICCO
Florham Park, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . "Homeless in the World" offers extraordinary insight into our ordinary existence at a time when we badly need it. The larger questions are so eloquently stated here. We are made aware of our existence as a totality, yet within the context of our daily lives. A powerful truth emerges, and it is liberating in the perspective it opens up to our view. . . .

BETTY WEITZ
Chappaqua, New York

WILLIAM BARRETT writes:

If I were "cavalier" about anyone's being or having been a Nazi, I would not be appearing in the pages of COMMENTARY. That should be axiomatic; and if Werner J. Dannhauser had kept this in mind, there would not be this present misunderstanding between us.

Mr. Dannhauser is of two minds whether you can separate Heidegger the thinker from his thought. At first he says no, but then concludes yes, *he* can. Come, come, Mr.

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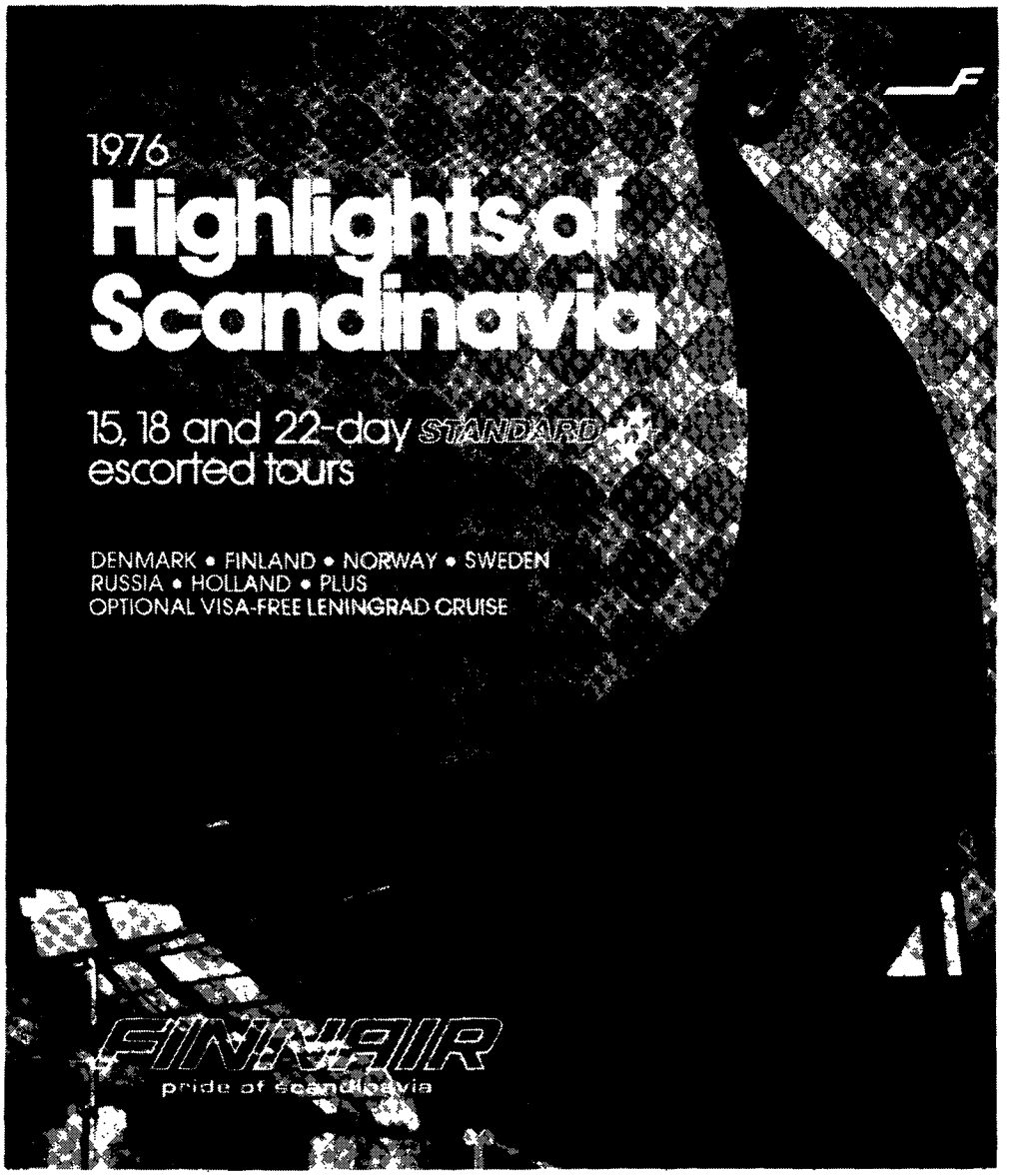

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Dannhauser, which is it? Were I to borrow your accusatory tone, "you owe us an explanation." But last thoughts are best, and we may take his final judgment as the one he really holds to: he admires Heidegger's thought, and therefore he must be able to separate the bad man from the good philosopher. But if he permits himself to make this separation, why shouldn't he allow me the same privilege?

And there the matter between Mr. Dannhauser and myself might end, except that Heidegger himself does not always allow us to remain with his ideas. When he enters the public arena, he seems to have a knack of making trouble for himself. Thus the disturbing fact for Mr. Dannhauser—and he is right to find it so—is Heidegger's publication in 1953 of a 1935 lecture in which he refers in passing to the "inner greatness" of the National Socialist movement. The passage is entirely irrelevant to the philosophic content of the book and could easily have been deleted. Whatever Heidegger's motives were, I do not know, but there are several points to be considered.

1) If he had suppressed the original statement, it could have been dug out anyway and then would have looked worse. He had said it, let it stand on the record. "You can run but you can't hide," as Joe Louis used to say.

2) The more important consideration is just what that "inner greatness" was supposed to consist in. The statement of it is compressed into one parenthetical phrase to the effect that its greatness consists in "the encounter of modern man with global technology." What can this phrase possibly have meant? The perplexing thing is to try to square its meaning, whatever that might have been in 1935, with the kind of philosophical thinking Heidegger was doing in 1953. For the past twenty-five years he has been teaching that the grave danger to Western man and his civilization is just this: the self-assertion of the human will, particularly as this will expresses itself in the technical-technological organization of life on a global scale. National Socialism was hailed by its followers as a resurgence of the national will. *The Triumph of the Will* was Leni Riefenstahl's title for her film of those early days of the movement, which some cineastes profess to admire still as a model documentary. Heidegger's thinking in recent decades has been a persistent disparagement of the will in all its public shapes. The will to power, in particular, is condemned as leading to the demoniacal willfullness of modern life. In the background of this thinking there looms the figure of the gentle mystic, Meister Eckhardt, who can hardly be taken as a spiritual symbol by storm-troopers. One can see how Heidegger's earlier notion of "resoluteness" might be twisted for Nazi purposes, but it would be quite impossible with the later philosophy, unless secretly all along National Socialism had been a pacifist and quietist movement. And unworldly in politics as Heidegger may be, I cannot believe that in 1953 he would be so naive as to believe that.

3) The damaging remark is embedded in a passage, the greater part of which is a very strong attack on the official National Socialist philosophy. *Der Spiegel*, in an otherwise unfriendly comment, acknowledges that this opposition to the official philosophy was a "courageous" act at the time on Heidegger's part. Perhaps, in reprinting the 1935 lecture, Heidegger wishes to show where he stood at the time; but then also, in all honesty, he could not suppress the damaging passage. This year, 1935, significantly, marks also the beginning of his withdrawal from official Nazi connections. In 1936 he published the first of his studies of the poet Hoelderlin, which marks the beginning of the period that some commentators have called Heidegger II. Yet he himself has insisted that only in the light of Heidegger II can one grasp Heidegger I; in other words, the later phase seeks to rescue the earlier Heidegger from Nazi misinterpretations.

The foregoing is no defense of Heidegger. I leave that to his biographer, whoever he or she may turn out to be. Besides, some things I don't find ultimately defensible. Heidegger's connection with the Nazis, however brief and whatever the exculpating circumstances, was a very grave moral lapse, and will remain permanently so. Surely it

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should be unnecessary for me to repeat this here; yet we seem to have entered a peculiar climate of debate where, no matter one's past record or present company, some overzealous policeman may demand that one show one's credentials once again.

Nevertheless, Heidegger's life did not come to an end with the destruction of National Socialism in 1945. During the last thirty years he has gone on thinking, writing, and teaching, and in that time his influence has spread and touched churchmen, theologians, philosophers, psychiatrists, and literary men. It would be a gratuitous insult to all those who have responded in any way to this influence to say that they were insensitive to the Nazi issue. The list would include Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt. (Buber, reviewing Heidegger's *Holzwege* [1950]), remarked that the level of philosophic thought there seemed to him to "belong to the ages." He did not bring up the Nazi issue. Had Mr. Dannhauser been around, would he have charged forward demanding an explanation?) In view of that continuing influence, it seems to me regrettable that the two parts of this life have not been brought into perspective, and particularly that Heidegger himself has made no statement about his past, and in my article I said so. The expression of this regret may be what has thrown Mr. Dannhauser off. But surely—unless we have lost all sense of proportion—to express regret at a situation left inconclusive and ambiguous is not to soften one's moral condemnation at what we find there to be condemned.

I do not know Heidegger. I have had only one formal exchange of letters with him, in the late 40's when I was an editor of *Partisan Review*, over a possible contribution, which turned out not to be available for our use. (Ironically enough in the present context, the piece in question was the great 1950 essay on Nietzsche, which is his first full-scale philosophical blast against the will to power.) As to the kind of man he is, I have had to depend on the impressions of others. The Swiss psychiatrist, Medard Boss, who knows him well, told me, "Heidegger will defend his ideas stubbornly, but will not defend himself."

I got the same impression from Hannah Arendt. In the early 60's there was the possibility of Heidegger's coming to this country to lead a seminar for a psychiatric circle in Washington; the Nazi question arose and Dr. Arendt and I were invited to come down and address ourselves to the issue. The last long conversation I was ever to have with her was on this subject; since she is not available, I can't repeat what she said; but it can be confirmed that she was then very ready and willing to speak to the issue. As it happened, Heidegger's visit never came through; and so far as I know, she never did speak publicly on this question. One of the things she made clear to me was that her correspondence on the matter, for the sake of particulars and documents, had been carried on with Mrs. Heidegger; he himself abstained from his own defense.

But perhaps he might be induced to change. His American publishers have been assembling a series of translations of his major works. They have been lucky to find some extraordinary interpreters and translators, and Heidegger himself has shown great interest in the project. Perhaps the editors could induce him to speak out for the sake of his American public. Otherwise the old question, in all its ugliness, will be coming up again and again.

I FIND that what I have written here goes very far afield from my essay, and yet because of the seriousness of the issue had to be said. My article was not a case study of the Heidegger question; nor was it even an attempt at anything like a formal "critique" or "assessment" of his thought. My essay was a meditation on the theme of alienation, for which I made use of certain ideas of Heidegger—as well as some of my own. I wish Mr. Dannhauser had read it in that light, for he might not then have asked me to do a lot of other things besides what I intended.

Israel's Options

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Based on the evidence he presents, how does Walter Laqueur ["Is Peace Possible in the Middle East?," March] conclude that peace would come to the Middle East "if only Israel would . . ."? He is quite clear on the point that if Israel had not existed the Arabs would have had to invent it, for only common enmity holds the Arabs together. He tells us that even this unifying force is frail and that "bitter civil war" is an ever-present possibility for the Arab nation, as the current horrors in Lebanon bear out only too well. Bernard Lewis ["The Return of Islam," January] confirms Mr. Laqueur's judgment that Arabs would not permit non-Muslims to "exercise political sovereignty in . . . the Muslim domain." Mr. Laqueur goes on to say that "a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would have all the makings of a permanent irredentism" and that such a state would exacerbate tensions, not relieve them, that the viability of a bi-national state anywhere is not great, and that both Soviet and U.S. guarantees of Israel's existence aren't worth much.

Why, then, does Mr. Laqueur suddenly shift gears and condemn Israel's "immobilism"? What reason has he to believe that Israeli withdrawal, ultimately to the 1967 boundaries, would be any more palatable to the Arabs than the same boundaries were in 1967 and that some PLO elements could be found who "would accept the existence of Israel"? I challenge Mr. Laqueur to discover such elements. They may exist among Maronite, Coptic, or Druze communities, but these are impotent in the Arab world. But Mr. Laqueur's clinching absurdity is that "the fate of the Palestinians is regarded by world public opinion as a grave injustice, to be remedied as soon as possible" and that "Zionism . . . resulted in the emergence of a Palestinian Arab question." I cannot accept that world public opinion, which has accepted and already forgotten the rapes of Czechoslovakia, Bangladesh and the Biharis, the Lebanese slaughter, and many other recent atrocities and near genocides, which pays no heed to the daily death by starvation of thousands, really gives a damn about the Palestinians (or anyone, for that matter). The Arab refusal to accept the UN Partition of 1947-48, not Zionism, created the Palestinians who, before that time, saw themselves as part of Greater Syria.

Mr. Laqueur could offer other more constructive and more plausible suggestions on a problem that must remain insoluble until some substantial Arab opinion accepts the existence of an independent

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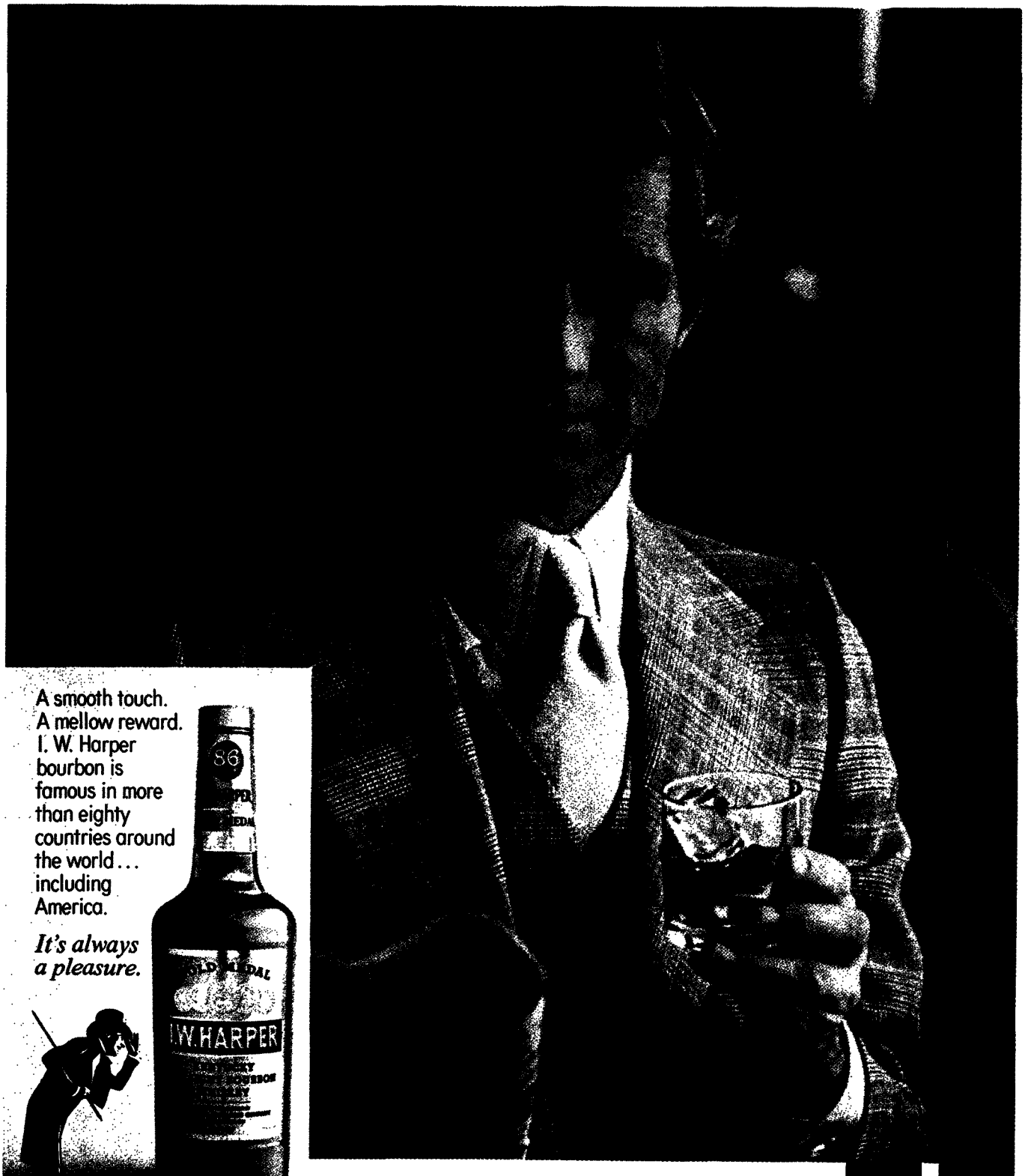

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Jewish state or until that state is destroyed. One plausible scenario, if it had not been vetoed by Henry Kissinger, might have been for Lebanon to invite Israel's aid in cleaning out the Fatah, thereby saving the Maronite community from its certain destruction. Jordan would probably have joined such an alliance, and Egypt would then have had the opportunity to end its rivalry with Syria for Arab leadership and to gain both an ally and a buffer against Syria. Such possibilities are less attractive to those who suffer from the . . . delusion that if only we turn the other cheek often enough, intransigents will suddenly become decent. The gaggle of military dictators and feudal autocrats who rule the Arab states understand only the reality of strength. They have as little regard for the Palestinians as they have for their own people. Jordan and Egypt occupied Arab Palestine for nineteen years, with no idea of establishing a Palestinian state, and "world public opinion" was silent. If Arabs ever win a war against Israel, Palestine will be divided among Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and the whole world will never lift a finger. . . . Only unquestionable military superiority will bring the Arabs to accept Israel in any boundaries. . . .

HAROLD J. WERSHOW
University of Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama

WALTER LAQUEUR writes:

Any similarity between what I wrote and what Harold J. Wershow quotes from my article is purely accidental. I find it therefore impossible to respond to his comments without repeating all my arguments.

Mr. Wershow's various suggestions and scenarios for Israel are less complicated than mine. Mr. Wershow writes with greater confidence than I do. Mr. Wershow writes from Birmingham, Alabama, I from Tel Aviv.

Political Philosophy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "In Praise of Alexander M. Bickel" [January], Nelson W. Polsby honors Bickel generally as a sensitive, intelligent, and decent human being and scholar, and specifically for his final work, *The Morality of Consent*, which constructs ". . . a liberal political philosophy that avoids the optimistic authoritarianism afflicting so much of contemporary liberal thought." While we share Mr. Polsby's general admiration for Bickel, we have serious questions concerning Bickel's philosophy and Mr. Polsby's representation of it.

We believe that there are at least two essential tests for evaluating any political philosophy. First, one must ask whether the philosophy is distinguishable from other philosophies—in this case, is the Whig philosophy distinguishable from the contractarian philosophy? The second test, which follows from the first, is whether the philosophy is simply rhetorical camouflage for justifying, in the name of the philosophy, those policies which its proponents support. We wish to argue that while Bickel's theoretical distinctions may have heuristic value, stimulating others to further probes in political-legal philosophy, in practice, applications of the Whig philosophy are equally reconcilable with the contractarian view. In short, virtually any prac-

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tice is compatible with either philosophy.

For Bickel, these two political philosophies have competed for control of the political and judicial processes since the American Revolution. Using his two models as a rough framework, in *The Morality of Consent* Bickel examines developments in American politics since the 1960's, with special attention to First Amendment problems, civil disobedience and disorder, the crisis of the university, and the Nixon Presidency. His thesis is that the growing dominance of the contractarian philosophy, epitomized in decisions of the Warren Court, triggered the political excesses which culminated in Watergate and the resignation of Richard Nixon. Bickel strongly suggests that a solution to these types of problems lies in critical political actors adopting the Whig philosophy to guide their political actions. . . .

Bickel argues that the liberal contractarian philosophy assumes as a starting point the natural-law view of rights, that is, that independent of circumstances and societies, there exists a set of natural rights which all individuals possess. In short, this is a non-contextual view in which law is based on the formation of a contract between citizens and government. In *The Morality of Consent,* Bickel depicts the contractarian as therefore believing that ". . . law is not so much a process, and certainly not a process in continual flux, as it is a body of rules binding all, rules that can be changed only by the same formal method by which they were enacted." Such a view, Bickel maintains, is inflexible, shortsighted, and, by implication, irresponsible. By contrast, Bickel argues that the Whig philosophy recognizes the virtue in the lessons taught by Edmund Burke—that we must begin with a real society, real human beings, relativity of values, and, above all, a commitment to the "irreducible value," law. The Burkean system, as applied by critical political actors, would generate preferable public policy because it would be "flexible, pragmatic, slow-moving [and] highly political." What appalled Burke about the French Revolution, appalls Bickel and Mr. Polsby about the direction in which America has moved since the 1960's—a movement which they believe resulted directly from the widespread adoption of the contractarian philoso-

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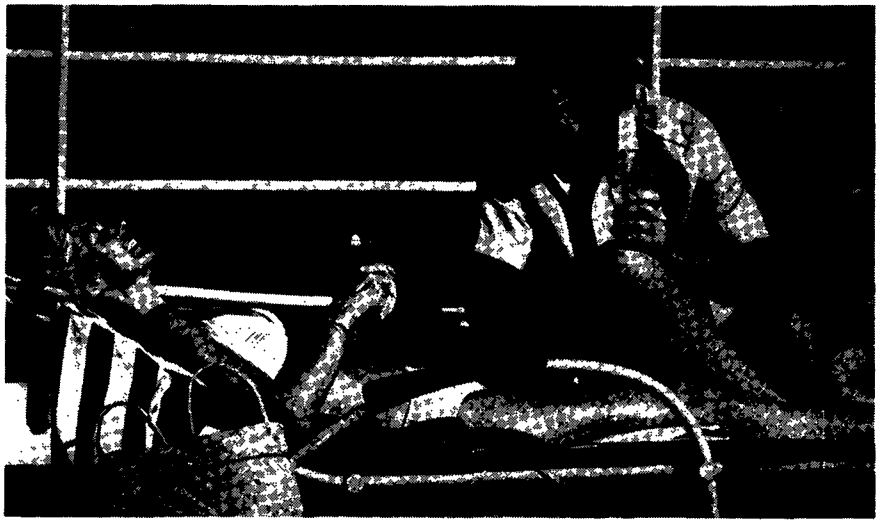

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phy. In essence, the Whig philosophy is a contextual one and the contractarian philosophy is a noncontextual one. The former generates "good" policies and the latter generates "bad" policies.

We disagree with Bickel's argument and are dismayed at Mr. Polsby's uncritical acceptance of it. Bickel's distinction between the contractarian and Whig philosophies is a weak one. Bickel seeks to convince us that acceptance of the contractarian philosophy has resulted in an effort to impose a particular social and political vision on American society. By implication, the Whig philosophy would not have done so because that philosophy, according to Bickel, provides us with a "computing principle" which dictates adherence to the ". . . morality of process which is the morality of consent." Such a principle balances competing visions of good and good, good and evil, and, on occasion, evil and evil. The Whig philosophy, we are led to believe, dictates no absolute moral principles to determine policy. Rather, it is a contextual philosophy which requires us to adhere to the morality of process. Yet such a claim is misleading. The Whig tradition and the contractarian tradition do not differ on *whether* to impose a particular social vision on America, but only on *which* vision to impose. The issue is not whether to take the contextual or the noncontextual view, but rather it is *who* should be permitted to define the "relevant" facts which make up the "context." That is to say, the computing principle does not exist outside of the minds of men who decide what facts will be entered into the computing equation and what relative weights will be accorded to each. What better evidence is there of this point than the admiration which Mr. Polsby shows for Bickel's perceptive defining of the American political situation? We learn over and over again that what Mr. Polsby finds as examples of admirable behavior on the part of Bickel are, by strange coincidence, that with which Mr. Polsby agrees.

Let us look at one prominent example of Bickel's own political behavior as presented by Mr. Polsby. In the Pentagon Papers case, Bickel based his defense not on an absolute view of the First Amendment ". . . presumption against prior restraint on publication," but rather on the grounds that in this particular situation, the government ". . . has utterly failed to make its case on the facts." To Mr. Polsby, this exemplifies a case in which the Whig sees that while certain conditions may justify prior restraints, the contextual demands of this particular one clearly require that the government be deprived of any ability to block publication. Why is this an example of a position compelled by the Whig philosophy or contextual demands? Simply because Mr. Polsby agrees with it! In fact, contextual demands could have also justified the government position, and the contractarian view could have also supported either result. Bickel could have just as easily taken the side of the government and argued that the context demanded an opposite result, that in this context, stability of the political system was at stake with further erosion of government prestige threatening America's position in the world. The contractarian could easily have taken either side and argued that the principle of national security superseded the First Amendment principle, or vice versa ("The contractarian model . . . is committed not to law alone but to a parochial faith in a closely calibrated scale of values"). In short, there are no facts for which one cannot find a context of justification for policy and there are no facts for which one cannot find a principle of justification. The context does not demand decisions, people do; the principles do not demand decisions, people do. If Bickel had, in fact, argued for prior restraint of publication within a contextual argument, the only difference would have been that Mr. Polsby would not have agreed with his conclusion and, therefore, might have inferred that he did not perceive accurately the contextual constraints.

If the distinction between the Whig and contractarian philosophies is indeed a weak one, then the true difference in the philosophies may be in their ability to be used as justifications for whatever policy one approves, as was seen in the Pentagon Papers example. In short, it is our suspicion that basically Bickel and Mr. Polsby offer not a choice of philosophies, but a choice of *justifications* for the political actions and social policies which they support. Mr. Polsby seems unconsciously to make this argument himself when he makes the incongruous and unexpected reference to justification: ". . . the need has accelerated for discipline and craftsmanship in the framing of issues and the *justification* of measures in the public arena" (emphasis added). Nowhere else does he mention the function of postulating a theory as camouflage for justification. Could this be, in fact, Mr. Polsby's unconscious realization of our point? Mr. Polsby then goes on to give us what are in fact two alternative types of justifications which masquerade as higher or lower orders of guidance. What Mr. Polsby claims to fear is the "conducting [of] our politics without the guidance of principle" on the one hand, and the conducting of our politics by principles which have degenerated into slogans, on the other. How does he claim to recognize them when they appear? Mr. Polsby's answer is that they appear when we are ". . . untutored by the legitimate concerns of politics. . . ." But again, how is it to be determined what are the "legitimate concerns of politics"? Our position is that what Mr. Polsby calls "legitimate concerns" are merely those concerns which he, and presumably Bickel, find legitimate. When Mr. Polsby finds that we are sloganeering or acting without the guidance of principle, we simply have policies of which he and Bickel disapprove.

In sum, it is our argument that in *The Morality of Consent* Alexander M. Bickel claimed to be presenting a philosophical blueprint to guide America out of a troubling and demoralizing period, while he was really announcing, *ex cathedra,* his particular social-policy preferences dressed up in philosophical costume. We find his philosophical distinctions weak, and without clear method of application. It is apparent that both Mr. Polsby and Bickel share a certain contentment with a political and social conservatism which they announce in terms of a response to a need for "prudential restraint of government" and flexibility, pragmatism, and responsible contextual demands. Why are these qualities seen as virtues rather than "demagogic slogans"? Because they are *justifications* of which Mr. Polsby and Bickel approve, for *policies* of which they approve.

LEE S. WEINBERG
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

RICHARD E. VATZ
Towson State College
Baltimore, Maryland

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NELSON W. POLSBY writes:

I see very little profit in discussing my "unconscious" views with Lee S. Weinberg and Richard E. Vatz. No doubt if I possess an unconscious worthy of the name, their access to it is every bit as good as mine, and their prior publication on the topic (see above) would appear to me to give them squatters' rights.

I do object to their palming off on my conscious mind views that I did not express (e.g., that Alexander Bickel's work for the New York *Times* illustrates the Whig philosophy) and do not hold (e.g., that Bickel's "admirable behavior" in one or another case expressed views that "by strange coincidence" I agree with). Like Charles Black, Robert Bork, Anthony Lewis, and lots of others, I had no difficulty admiring Alexander Bickel and disagreeing with him at the same time. This ought to suggest that there really is a morality of process that can be usefully distinguished from the outcomes it produces, but I won't belabor the point.

The rest of the Weinberg-Vatz communication boils down, I believe, to the assertion that in his collected essays Bickel offers nothing in the way of support for his point of view but bald statements of preference. There is, I suppose, a long answer to such an assertion, which would involve recapitulating the rather rich web of arguments, empirical assertions, prudential calculations, appeals to reason, invocations of common experience, and so on that occur in Bickel's work. One can agree or disagree with various of Bickel's assumptions or conclusions (as I say, I did both), one can follow or not follow a chain of his reasoning, but to fail to notice that a fairly complex argument is being made, consisting of many elements beside the mere statement of preferences, strikes me as remarkably obtuse.

Part of the problem may be that Messrs. Weinberg and Vatz do not appear to grasp Bickel's view that a significant task of the political philosopher is to construct and examine justifications for political acts. Yet it seems to me plain enough that in *The Morality of Consent* Bickel set himself the task of building—not camouflaging—a set of justifications that could discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable political acts more persuasively than the doctrines currently employed for this purpose by many of his fellow liberals. I think it is certainly worthwhile to ponder whether or not Bickel got off on the right foot in proposing a sharp distinction between Whig and contractarian traditions, and I hope a few good minds take the trouble to pursue the problem.

Of the less good minds, I think enough said.

October 1973 & May 1948

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I have finally determined that Theodore Draper in his article, "The United States and Israel" [April 1975], was right all along in his claim that the U.S. threatened to use its own planes to resupply the Egyptian Third Army if Israel did not open supply lines for the Egyptians. I feel that since I muddied the waters on this matter [see my letter and Mr. Draper's reply, September 1975], I owe COMMENTARY readers an explanation.

My error came in depending on the transcript of Dayan's lecture printed eight days after the event by *Ma'ariv*. That transcript was not a true rendering of Dayan's remarks, as my colleague Leslie Hazelton learned when she took the time to listen to a tape recording of the lecture. In it Dayan says: "The Americans said no more nor less than this: 'If you don't allow the Third Army to receive civilian, not military, supplies—food and water—if you bomb them and force them to surrender, then we, the United States, will send our planes, our helicopters, to bring them supplies and you will be in trouble with us.' "

The *Ma'ariv* transcript read: ". . . 'we the United States, will dissociate from you.' " No mention is made of planes or helicopters, and certainly not U.S. ones.

I have learned on excellent authority that the *Ma'ariv* change was sought by the government and agreed to by Dayan, presumably on the grounds that such information could only harm U.S.-Israeli relations. But as we can see, such changes do even more harm to good historical research. At any rate, I am satisfied that the episode actually did happen as Mr. Draper postulated in his article and that I was misled by the altered text and the faulty memories of several of the participants. . . .

DONALD NEFF

Time-Life News Service

Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I appreciate Gary V. Smith's apology [Letters from Readers, April] for having mistakenly repeated an error in the London *Spectator* of May 12, 1961, that attributed the authorship of Harry Levin's *Jerusalem Embattled* to me, he leaves standing the purported quotation, that Haganah loudspeakers broadcast "flee or you will all be killed" to drive Arabs out of Jerusalem. Having found an error in the attribution of authorship, he might have checked the text. The line is a propagandistic distortion of a passage on page 160 of this remarkable diary, in which Harry Levin described crossfire in Mea Shearim, mostly a Jewish area: "Nearby, a loudspeaker burst into Arabic. Haganah broadcasting to civilian Arabs, urging them to leave the district before 5:15 A.M. 'Take pity on your wives and children and get out of this bloodbath,' it said. 'Surrender to us with your arms. No harm will come to you. Or get out by the Jericho road, that is still open to you. If you stay you invite disaster.' " Further reading of the diary provides a totally different impression of the Jewish attitude to the Arab flight from the one left by the misquoted out-of-context excerpt. Though I have no wish to prolong this exchange, the record should be clear.

MEYER LEVIN

Beit Yanai, Israel

"Barry Lyndon"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I often wish that movie reviewers who are disappointed by highly regarded films would agree to reserve judgment. William S. Pechter's superficially careful, analytical criticism of Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* ["Kubrick and Peckinpah Revisited," Movies, March] is just the type of writing which he will probably regret in ten years, as most New York critics are now embarrassed by their remarks about *2001*.

I do not have the space in a letter to explain why I believe that Stanley Kubrick is an artistic genius. Allow me a few words, however. His vision is brilliant and unconventional—it takes a leap of the imagination to appreciate it, much more than is required to appreciate excellent but conventional movies like *Taxi Driver* or *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Mr. Pechter's error, as I see it, is his insistence on finding the meaning of the work in

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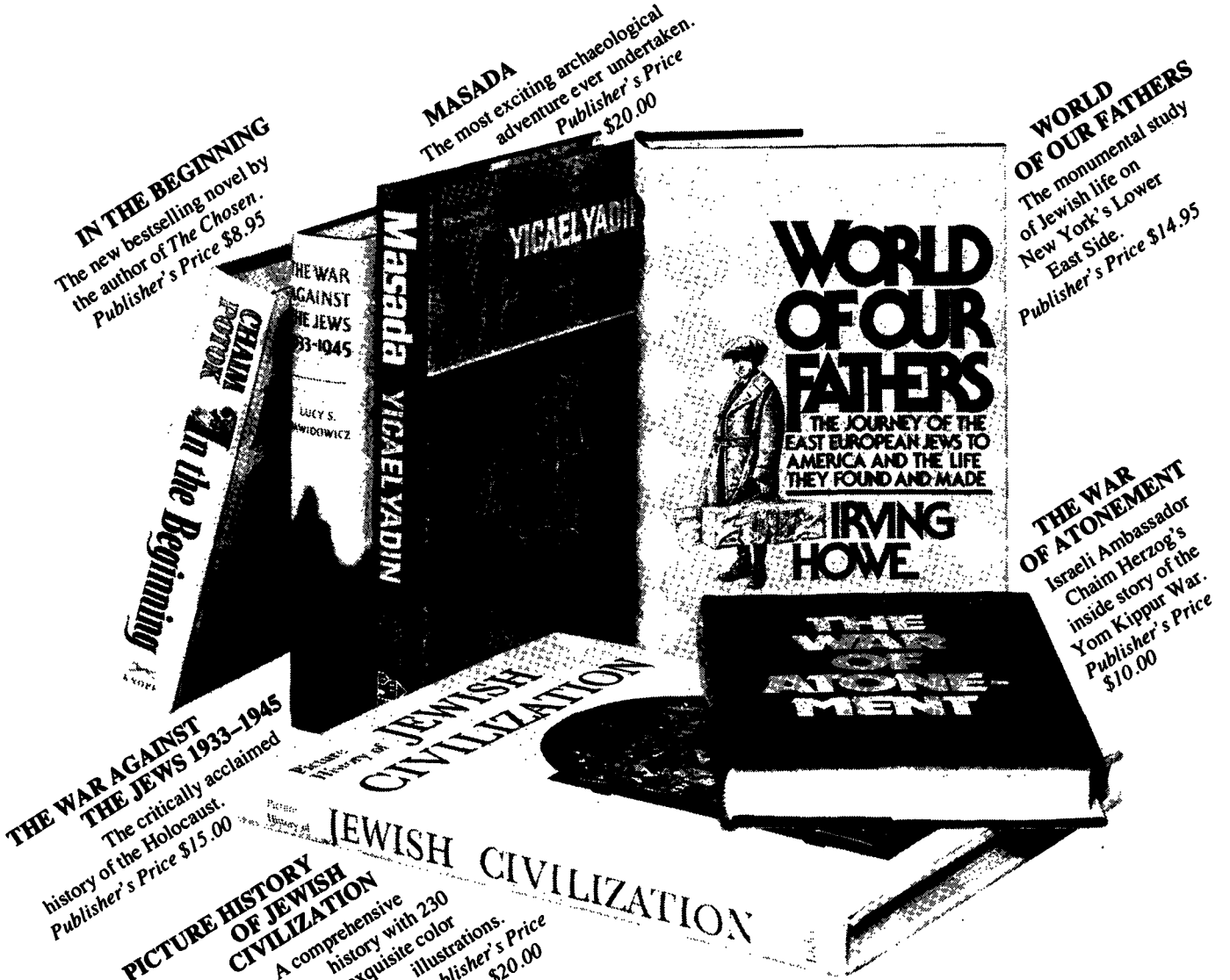
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Barry's actions or interactions with other characters. In other words, he shouldn't have been "waiting for *the actors to come.*" Rather, as he astutely implies, Kubrick's point is that human potential is reduced by Fate, by immediate environment, by an indifferent universe. We must necessarily look elsewhere for meaning.

Here, Mr. Pechter's remarks about the film's visual "magnificence" apply. There is a contrast of an apparently ordered, grand cosmos which contains selfish, vicious, or completely unsuccessful persons. The film style, consisting of long shots which suggest the insignificance of human endeavor relative to an overwhelming natural order, and rear lighting, which flattens characters to stress outlines and two-dimensionality (or lack of substance), convey the film's idea that although externally ordered by ritual and propriety, life is ultimately absurd.

In view of this analysis, Barry Lyndon must go "nowhere." By contrast, *Barry Lyndon* goes on to articulate an artistic vision that is profoundly pessimistic, though certainly not misanthropic. To admit a pessimistic vision honestly is not the same as blessing it.

KEN MOSKOWITZ
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

WILLIAM S. PECHTER writes:

While I appreciate Ken Moskowitz's solicitude for my feelings ten years hence, and will take under advisement his interesting suggestion that critics declare a moratorium (of ten years, presumably) on the expression of reservations about films which are highly regarded, there are still a few last words on the subject of Kubrick and *Barry Lyndon* that I'd like to get in before the decade is out. I didn't review *2001* (which I happen—with some serious reservations—to like) when it opened, and can't presume to speak of my colleagues' possible embarrassment over their first views of it, but thus far know of only one published recantation (by Andrew Sarris).

Not that I haven't had second thoughts about films I've reviewed—I've already had some on *The Killer Elite,* which I still dislike but now feel calls for something more than my piece's curt dismissal. But if Mr. Moskowitz had been less intent on all-embracing leaps of the imagination and the like, he might have noticed that not only do I grant *Barry Lyndon* its peculiar fascination but I attempt, in effect, *to defend it against the charge by* several reviewers that it's only a boring procession of contentless pretty pictures, or a genteel exercise in illustrating the classics (Harold Rosenberg, in fact, *praised* the film in the Sunday *Times* for being the latter), and I try to relate the content of *Barry Lyndon*'s images to Kubrick's earlier work. To quote from my review (and take an opportunity to set right a sentence that unfortunately fell victim to typographical gremlins): "There, amid the grand and sumptuous decors of his past, man acts out his petty and futile vanities with all the triviality of those heirs seen making small talk and phone calls home at stations in outer space amid the technological marvels of *2001.*"

That content I find in *Barry Lyndon* I identify as "misanthropy," though Mr. Moskowitz takes me to mean this to be a bad word, and, despite his doing a fair job of describing Kubrick's misanthropy himself, he prefers to call it "pessimism." Yet to appreciate the difference between the two one has only to compare a work such as Kubrick's *The Killing* with the film—John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle*—to which it virtually pays homage (or, for that matter, to compare *Barry Lyndon* with Huston's most recent, *The Man Who Would Be King*). For Huston as for Kubrick, the quests on which his characters embark are destined to end badly, but, in Huston's world, this doesn't preclude the possibilities of there being some meaning in the endeavor or of the attainment of individual heroism. But for Kubrick, all is meaningless futility, and the characters of his film ultimately are as one in their utter insignificance. Not that even this necessarily dooms his work to failure; but if a *2001* is a success, it's also a special case of a film whose mode isn't dramatic, and one in whose images the role of objects has been elevated to primacy over that of people. (Despite which, it has an interesting and exciting actor—Keir Dullea—cast in its lead, while *Barry Lyndon* has a costumer's dummy.) And though I've no doubt that the effect I describe as that of watching a huge stage set (like *2001, Barry Lyndon* is a film of vast spaces) to which no actors come is *Barry Lyndon*'s intended one, it is achieved by straining to divest a mode (the picaresque novel) naturally given to dramatic *interaction among richly drawn* characters of these very qualities. If, in *2001,* background objects have been brought to the fore, this isn't quite the same as *Barry Lyndon*'s elimination of a foreground altogether—and though Mr. Moskowtiz may be prepared to fill up the resultant emptiness with imaginative leaps of belief in Kubrick's artistic genius, I suspect that I'll be as little inclined to join him in 1986 as I am at the present.

Literature & Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The review of my book, *The Image of the Jew in American Literature* [Books in Review, March], by Elinor Grumet is a caricature. It exhibits careless reading, downright misreading, and assertions contrary to fact.

The reviewer is exercised because I had the temerity to approach the problem of anti-Semitism in literature in the broadest sense and as a whole, in "folklore, in mass culture, and serious literary works alike." Of course there are differences, but material is anti-Semitic, intended or unintended, whether it occurs in low or high literature. In my preface I made my purpose clear: "The present study is by no means strictly literary in intent, since we are mainly interested in discovering the image of the Jew in the United States throughout its history. If some authors seem to receive far more attention than their literary quality merits, it is not because literary quality or lack of it is misapprehended, but rather because their work is valuable in revealing attitudes toward the Jew." Since the status of each type is clear from the context, and since I make frequent judgments as to literary quality, I am at a loss to understand what basis Miss Grumet has for asserting that I assign "equal weight to expressions of wildly unequal import." I was interested in exploring attitudes in writings intended for *all* publics, and not only for readers of high literature.

Is this an invalid objective for investigation? The reviewer asserts that the "Jewish use of literary surveys . . . to 'set the record straight' is an exhausted . . . tradition." Isn't it a little early to declare the subject exhausted? My study is the first and only comprehensive survey of the

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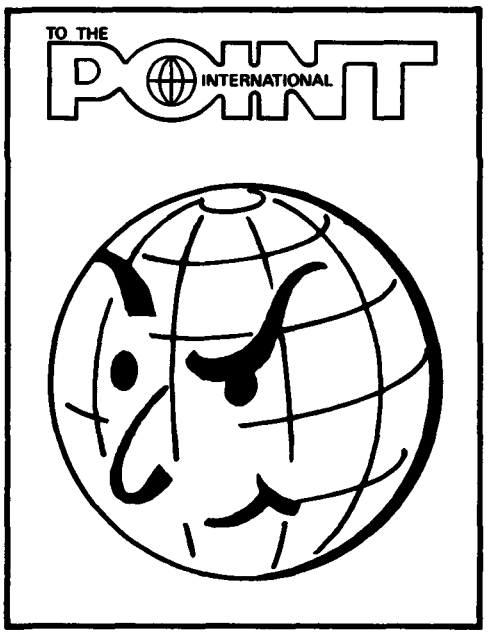

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phenomenon in the several literary genres in the United States from the end of the 18th century to Abraham Cahan. . . .

I suspect that the reviewer is bothered by the casting of a candid eye upon great figures like Hawthorne and Henry James. Great writers are ill-served by abject worship. For instance, the reviewer complains that I "imply"—not that I *wrote*—that *"The Golden Bowl* is no different from a dime novel." This is false. The only inference that can legitimately be drawn from what I wrote is that there are unpleasant Jewish stereotypes in the James novel and, *in another chapter,* that there are unpleasant Jewish stereotypes in the dime novel. Does she wish us to believe that the Jewish stereotype is less a stereotype if done by a James than by a dime novelist?

I was entirely sensible of the hazards of parochialism in a study such as mine, and I explicitly warned the reader against them. In my introduction I wrote: "When one confronts a documented history of ill-will toward the Jews manifested in most literature through nearly the entire gamut of writers, from the great to the untalented, there is danger that one's perspective may be skewed. . . . Perhaps one is tempted to depreciate hitherto venerated literary figures, but such a response to the treatment of the Jews in literature would be itself ill-considered and lacking in perspective."

The reviewer gives ample evidence of careless reading.

Item. The reviewer charges that I "confound malicious intent with mere habit or the desire to pander to mass taste." No examples are offered. In fact I was scrupulous throughout to make such distinctions. Of many examples, I cite one: "Many writers did not know Jews"; they "uncritically accepted the current lore about Jews, . . . resorted to the familiar stereotype, and often fell into anti-Jewish locutions as if they were figures of speech . . . idioms." Furthermore, I was very careful to point out the ambivalence in the attitudes of many writers.

Item. The reviewer tries to minimize the anti-Semitism in Hawthorne which I documented with over a page of quotations. She comments on "a single remark in Hawthorne's English notebooks on the 'repugnance' he felt toward Jews." The whole section is too long to quote, but here are only a few sentences from this "single remark." Hawthorne sat opposite a bearded Jew at a London dinner and he describes this Jew, with whom he doesn't say he exchanged a word: he was "the Jew of Jews; the distilled essence of all the Jews that have been born since Jacob's time; he was Judas Iscariot; he was the Wandering Jew; he was the worst, and at the same time the truest type of the race. . . . I never beheld anything so ugly and disagreeable, and preposterous, and laughable, as the outline of his profile; it was so hideously Jewish, and so cruel. . . . I rejoiced exceedingly in this Shylock, this Iscariot; for the sight of him justified me in the repugnance I have always felt toward his race." An antipathy so intense may well have influenced his rendering of the Jew in his fiction. In a whole chapter, summarily dismissed by the reviewer, I suggest a possible connection between this feeling and his conception of the Wandering Jew in about a half-dozen of his works. . . .

Item. The reviewer writes that I was "loyal to the myth that all major writers at the turn of the century were virulently anti-Semitic." False. On the contrary, I was scrupulous in each case to draw conclusions based on a presentation of documented evidence in that case, and the results varied. Some writers were ambivalent; others, like Mark Twain and Howells, while at times ambivalent, were nevertheless on the whole sensitive to the Jewish predicament; a few, like Henry Adams in his letters and Frank Norris in his characterization of Zerkow in *McTeague,* were "virulently anti-Semitic." . . .

Item. The reviewer charges that "nowhere" did I "draw on . . . the information" in the valuable primary material discovered by Rudolf Glanz. If she will consult my Index under "Glanz, Rudolf," she will find on pages 531, 537, 546, and 564 references to Glanz material that I used. In fact, throughout my book I used primary material, in each case drawn from the complete works of the author treated.

Item. Nowhere did I "dismiss" Edgar Rosenberg's *From Shylock to Svengali.* On the contrary, I call it a "brilliantly written and highly selective study." In my introduction I discuss the contrasting methodological approaches of Montagu Modder and Rosenberg. . . .

Miss Grumet concludes her review with a quotation from a book I wrote about thirty years ago—nor does she inform the reader of this time lapse—as if in all respects that book represents my thinking of today, as if I had learned nothing in the interim. In view of this dubious procedure, as well as her misreadings and misrepresentations of my present book, is it any wonder that I deeply suspect that she was predisposed to condemn my book?

LOUIS HARAP

Belmont, Vermont

ELINOR GRUMET writes:

Contrary to Louis Harap's suspicion, when I undertook to review his book I was excited by its extensive compilation of new material in a field sorely in need of such groundwork. It was only on carefully reading it that I took strong exception to its critical assumptions about that fascinating material.

Mr. Harap rejects my review in part because he conceives that I venerate "literature" and am disturbed by his bold coupling of popular and "high" materials, as well as by his frank discussion of the anti-Semitic feelings of the great. Actually, my disappointment with his book stems from the fact that I esteem literature as a craft like any other, and would approach both his work and that of "great writers" accordingly. Mr. Harap's disavowal of a "strictly literary" intent does not exempt him from being judged by accepted critical standards.

I took exception to Mr. Harap's method of deducing authorial "attitude"—ascribing, for example, the sentiments of Henry James's characters to the novelist; attempting to demonstrate the "essential identicalness of [David] Levinsky with Cahan himself"; introducing as evidence of a writer's prejudice the work of his close friends. Thus, I do not dispute the indisputable evidence of Hawthorne's prejudice, but I question whether it may be read into *The Marble Faun,* and whether the distinction between Hawthorne's feelings of social disgust for Jews and his use of the pliant metaphor of the Wandering Jew can be so summarily collapsed.

In pursuing a writer's attitudes—as he does in his discussion of James, Hawthorne, and Cahan, for example—Mr. Harap is not merely recording "unpleasant Jewish stereotypes" in fiction, but is opening up serious questions of intent

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and of the relationship between personal feeling and creative work, which he meets only with an oversimplified psychology. In certain sections, like the one on Ambrose Bierce, the material presented is almost entirely biographical; Emma Lazarus's commitments to commendable social causes are carefully enumerated in praise of her attitude. With such a basic confusion about the *object* of study, the point Mr. Harap wishes to make in each of these particular cases, beyound the "exposure" of feelings—the exposure of each person's apparent nature—is unclear. This is the point with which my review began.

As for turn-of-the-century writers, Mr. Harap's conclusions are not at all as clearly conceived in his book as they are in his letter. He writes of the realists: "All of them were, to a lesser or greater extent, swept along by the prejudiced or racist attitudes toward the immigrants prevalent in the later years of the century. At best, one can say of the realists' attitude toward the Jews on the whole that it was ambivalent; at worst, in Norris's case, it was plainly anti-Semitic." In the text, such distinctions disappear in an argument that proceeds by innuendo. Mr. Harap adduces the "ambivalence" of Howells from the author's simple categorical rejection of anti-Semitism in a symposium in the *American Hebrew:* "Why," writes Mr. Harap, "did he not, as did friends like Edward Everett Hale and Oliver Wendell Holmes, make some attempts at analysis [of the problem]?" Clearly, for Mr. Harap, "ambivalence" is an infinitely elastic term, and "anti-Semitism" comes only in degrees, not in kinds.

Finally, despite his few words of praise for Edgar Rosenberg's book, Mr. Harap does in fact dismiss Rosenberg's methodology. Had he not, he might have saved himself from confusing the truths of literature with the truths of social reality, or the feelings of an author with the possible feelings of his audience.

Soviet-American Exchanges

To the Editor of Commentary:

Theodore Draper's otherwise thoughtful article on détente ["Appeasement & Détente," February] unfortunately conveys a distorted impression of the current state of Soviet-American academic-exchange programs. According to Mr. Draper: "The Soviet scholar who comes to the United States can see anything he asks for in American universities and libraries. He goes back and writes about America's most painful contemporary problems—ethnic conflicts, student riots, unemployment, crime, black nationalism, and the like. . . ." Mr. Draper then quotes Robert Byrnes, former chairman of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, which was disbanded in 1968, to illustrate what he believes to be the imbalances working to the Soviets' advantage: " '[The] most interesting subject of study in the Soviet Union is Soviet political history—for example, Stalin and Trotsky, the history of the party, the relationship between party and government, the purges of the 1930's, Soviet foreign policy, Soviet economic policy, and so forth. We have never been able to send a single American scholar to the Soviet Union to look at any of these problems.' "

The impression given is that scores of Soviet researchers come here to write numerous hostile studies of the United States. Such statements are seriously misleading, and the listing which Mr. Draper cites is not representative, as he implies. In fact, in the last six years, only eight Soviet researchers have come on the exchange to work on such topics. Moreover, the research titles given by Mr. Draper are provocatively inaccurate. What he lists as "ethnic conflicts" and "crime" was a study of "Contemporary Problems of the Development of Cities in the U.S."; as "unemployment" were studies of "Industrial and Labor Relations in the U.S. During the 1960's and 1970's," "U.S. Government-Labor Relations," and "Socioeconomic Stratification in Industry." Similarly, "student riots" were covered in two studies, "The Influence of the Scientific-Technological Revolution on Youth" and "The Crisis of the 60's in the U.S." The scholar working on "black nationalism" was in fact doing a study of "The History of Mass Movements in the U.S."

The second claim, that no American scholars have ever been allowed to do research on similar questions concerning Soviet society, is simply false. During the current academic year alone, at least sixteen American scholars are doing research in the USSR on such topics in the contemporary social sciences, among them: "Legal Problems of Technology Transfer with the Soviet Union," "General Supervisory Functions of the Soviet Procuracy," "Planning the Time-Rate Use of Resources Under Socialism," "Systematic Social Engineering in Soviet Central Asia: The Revolutionary Experience of Moslem Women, 1930-1970," and "Relationship between Party Bureaucracy and Civil Administration in City Planning." Similar topics have been studied in each of the last three years.

Any fair evaluation of the Soviet-American academic-exchange programs will show that growing reciprocity now exists in these relationships and that a pattern of increasingly frank scholarly interchange is slowly developing. Of course, difficult and intimidating problems still exist in this and other areas of the "special relationship" between the Soviet Union and the United States. At a time of serious national debate on the issues involved in this relationship, hard questions should and will be asked. But the questioners are obliged to argue from a base of information that is not obsolete or narrowly conceived. The issues and consequences are too important to make uninformed mistakes.

Daniel C. Matuszewski
International Research and
Exchanges Board
New York City

Theodore Draper writes:

Daniel C. Matuszewski is taking issue with Professor Robert F. Byrnes whom I cited at length. But Professor Byrnes is not alone in his view. In the same volume in which the interview with Professor Byrnes has been reprinted (*Détente,* edited by G.R. Urban, Universe Books), there appears the following observation by Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski of Columbia University:

> United States diplomats, businessmen, journalists, etc. are subjected to incomparably greater restraints than their Soviet counterparts in the United States. American scholars are often not only harassed but excluded from the Soviet Union, in marked contrast to the welcome extended in the United States to Soviet specialists. The Soviet side is free to lobby in America and even to promote joint American-Soviet lobbies in America, whereas American access to the Soviet elite is strictly circumscribed (pp. 270-71).

I have also asked another dis-

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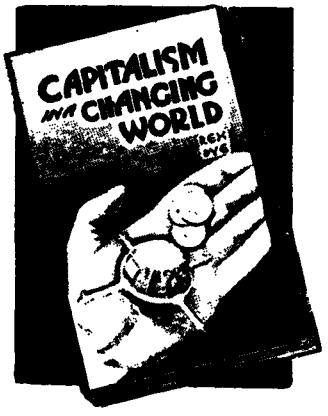

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tinguished authority on Soviet affairs, Professor Richard Pipes of Harvard University, for his view on the matter. Professor Pipes has written to me as follows:

> The question...is a complicated one. Professor Byrnes's assessment seems to me correct, and there can be little doubt that in these cultural exchanges we come out on the short end for just the reasons he and you adduce. On the other hand, this inequality permeates the whole relationship of "peaceful coexistence" in which a disorganized and on the whole naively optimistic society such as ours deals with a centralized and deliberate bureaucratic apparatus such as the Soviet.
>
> My own experience can be summarized as follows: I applied through IREX to go on a two-month exchange to the Soviet Union to work in half-a-dozen archives on materials dealing with the life of Peter Struve. My application was approved and I did spend two months in Moscow and Leningrad as a guest of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences. The Institute treated me in the most offhand manner possible and acted only when I made myself a deliberate nuisance by telephoning and visiting them day after day, demanding action. They eventually secured me access to the most important archive in Moscow for my purposes (TsGAOR). However, in TsGAOR I was never shown the catalogue, so I had no idea what relevant materials they possessed; I was entirely at their mercy. That is, I appeared every morning in the reading room set aside for foreigners and was given folders. Some of these were relevant, some were not. Sometimes when I asked for specific materials which I knew they had, I was refused; when, however, after going over Soviet doctoral dissertations I located the pertinent shelf-markers of the documents in question, the materials miraculously appeared. I was subsequently told by friendly Soviet scholars that TsGAOR had a variety of materials pertinent to my topic which were not shown to me.
>
> None of the other archives in Moscow to which I desired access was opened to me, although I had applied for them months in advance: whether this was due to bureaucratic foul-up or to deliberate design I have no way of knowing.
>
> In Leningrad, by contrast, I was extremely well-treated and everything was done to help me in my research.
>
> My experience in sum was a mixed one; I am glad I went because I did get access to materials I needed, but at the same time I failed to see a great deal more.
>
> It is quite correct that graduate students in Russian affairs in this country consider a year's stay in the Soviet Union a kind of union ticket and that in order to qualify they tend to tailor their thesis subjects to make them acceptable to the Soviet authorities. The result is that we get largely dissertations of a politically "inoffensive" character. In preparing my course on the Russian Revolution recently I was appalled to see how little work is being done by the younger generation of American scholars on such topics as the Cheka, forced-labor camps, food requisitions, the White Movement, censorship, anti-Soviet peasant uprisings, etc., which are not only of the utmost importance, but which for understandable reasons are not treated by Soviet scholars.

Unfortunately, I can pursue this inquiry only to a very limited extent. Nevertheless, there is already enough evidence to demonstrate the need for a thorough inquiry into "the supposed lack of reciprocity in this area," as Mr. Matuszewski puts in. Can it be that three such experienced and knowledgeable scholars and teachers of the rank of Professors Byrnes, Brzezinski, and Pipes are inventing a problem that does not exist? The least that can be said is that Mr. Matuszewski's disclaimers cannot be taken at their face value.

Mr. Matuszewski charges me personally with being "provocatively inaccurate." It happens that I was repeating almost exactly what Professor Byrnes said. I used the terms "ethnic conflicts, student riots, unemployment, crime, black nationalism, and the like." This list was based on the following by Professor Byrnes—"the student riots at our universities and high schools, the role of the blacks and other minorities, the Negro liberation movement, inflation, unemployment, urban squalor, crime" (*Survey*, Autumn 1974, p. 60).

Moreover, if anyone is here being "provocatively inaccurate," it is Mr. Matuszewski. I was obviously referring to subjects, not "research titles." His list of "titles" could easily cover the subjects mentioned by Professor Byrnes and me.

There is something else in Mr. Matuszewski's letter that troubles me about its good faith. The long first paragraph seeks to give the reader the impression that the "supposed lack of reciprocity" is a myth or even libel. But in the last paragraph, we suddenly learn from Mr. Matuszewski himself that there is only "growing reciprocity," that the pattern of increasingly frank scholarly interchange is "slowly developing," and that "of course, difficult and intimidating problems still exist" in this area. This kind of disingenuous double-talk should make anyone wonder who is guilty of "uninformed mistakes." "Growing reciprocity" implies that there has been a lack of reciprocity but that the gap is less than it used to be. If Mr. Matuszewski had said this, I would respect him. As it is, his letter—together with the testimonials of Professors Byrnes, Brzezinski, and Pipes—has merely succeeded in convincing me that a thorough inquiry into this program is long overdue.

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The Soviet-Egyptian "Rift"

Uri Ra'anan

FOR the fourth time since 1959 the Western public is being inundated with stories alleging that Moscow and Cairo have reached a point of irreversible rupture. Twice Nasser and Khrushchev were said to have broken for good; and, for the second time now, the same thing is being said of Sadat and Brezhnev. Few seem to notice that each new instance demonstrates the previous quarrel to have been rather less than final.

The "rift" between Sadat and Brezhnev, according to the most widely accepted version, began to develop some years ago with Moscow's attempt, after the death of President Nasser, to interfere in Egyptian domestic affairs and place constraints upon Cairo's military plans. Quarrels then erupted over the non-delivery of certain, unspecified, "offensive" Soviet weapons, culminating eventually in President Sadat's "expulsion" of Soviet experts in 1972. Following this exacerbation of relations with the Kremlin, Sadat, in the wake of the October 1973 war, charged the Soviet Union with failure to "compensate" him for weapons lost in battle, and began to "open the door" to Washington as a prospective new friend and arms supplier. The years 1974-76 allegedly saw further limitations on Soviet arms shipments to Egypt, amounting in the end to an almost total embargo. Cairo supposedly is now attempting to "replace" the USSR altogether as Egypt's main weapons donor, and the gulf between the two countries is described as well-nigh unbridgeable.

Thus far the conventional wisdom. What this version of events suggests, let it be noted, is nothing so mundane as the usual fluctuation between mutual accommodation and animosity that characterizes *all* relations between strong and weak countries, nor even that special variant of the carrot-and-stick method of diplomacy with which the Soviet Union is prone to manipulate its client states. Instead, we are told that a unique opportunity has been created for the United States to supplant the USSR as the primary patron and arms donor of Egypt, essentially "expelling" Soviet influence from that part of the world and opening the way for the creation of a *pax Americana* in the Middle East. However, to the extent that this "opportunity" depends on a final Soviet-Egyptian break, it is unlikely to be realized. For the evidence indicates that the full story of Soviet-Egyptian relations is much more ambiguous than the conventional wisdom would have it, and much less of a triumph for the United States.

I

DESPITE its new civilian garb, the regime of President Sadat continues to rest upon the shoulders of the officer corps. Sadat, after all, was a member and is the heir of the "Free Officers" who seized power in 1952. The military and security elite constitutes the domestic power base of the Egyptian leadership, as well as the foundation of its foreign-policy plans and aspirations.* For domestic as well as foreign considerations, therefore, Cairo could not conceivably dispense with the army as a major instrument of policy. Nor could it act in any manner likely to alienate the officer corps, such as by weakening or destroying the military supply link through which that army is equipped and maintained as a modern fighting force. Thus a final rupture with the Soviet Union would pose serious dangers for the regime, unless a fully satisfactory substitute were available.

It has been argued, however, that the USSR *could* be replaced as Egypt's source of weapons by a consortium of Western arms suppliers, including the U.S., Britain, and France, as well as China (which produces some spare parts for Soviet-manufactured hardware). This contention ignores such fundamental factors as quantity and military doctrine. During 1971-75, for example, the USSR supplied (and resupplied) four Arab countries—Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Algeria—with nearly 5,000 tanks (after first taking care of the needs of the

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* The latter pertain not only to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also to Egyptian ambitions in the upper reaches and sources of the Nile, in the North African littoral, particularly Libya, in Syria (with which Egypt has attempted several times to merge), and at the entrance to the Red Sea, including Eritrea, Somalia, and Yemen—Egypt's "Vietnam," where an Egyptian expeditionary force was bogged down for years trying to subdue ill-equipped tribes.

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Red Army itself, of its allies in the Warsaw Pact, and of other Communist states, such as Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam). By contrast, *total* U.S. tank production for last year amounted to a scant 600, and British and French production was correspondingly smaller. In other words, the Soviet Union in a fairly brief period has been able to supply some secondary clients overseas with almost ten times the total U.S. annual production of armor.

Sadat himself has drawn the moral of these statistics. Asked recently whether other suppliers could "compensate Egypt for Soviet arms," he replied:

> If I wanted to replace the quantities of Soviet arms I have, I would need at least twenty years, because the war factories in Europe are owned by companies which cannot produce the same quantities as those produced by the Soviet Union, because the Soviet Union allocates an enormous part of its industries to war production. Therefore, it can give quantities which are difficult for others. . . . *

While the estimate of "at least twenty years" seems exaggerated, there is little question that any attempt to re-equip the Egyptian forces entirely from non-Soviet sources would take a *very* long time—even granting, for a moment, that it were feasible at all. The fact remains that for two decades Egypt has been habituated to the use of Soviet weapons in the large quantities cited. This follows Soviet military thinking, inculcated at the Moscow Frunze Academy into most ranking Egyptian officers, during prolonged indoctrination emphasizing sheer numbers and firepower of arms that are relatively simple to operate. For a populous but technologically lagging country like Egypt, this approach is most suitable. Thus an irreversible break with the USSR would have devastating consequences. In addition to having to retrain Egyptian forces to operate new and quite different weapons systems, frequently more complicated than Soviet arms, the Egyptian General Staff itself would require a fundamental re-education in an entirely new system of planning, logistics, and operations. As Sadat said on another occasion last year: "I am not mad enough to think I can change my arms in a few years. It is not feasible."†

This does not mean that Cairo is averse to developing a certain degree of diversification in arms acquisition. Egypt, indeed, has taken steps to diversify in recent years, and probably will continue to do so. However, these moves have been confined to essentially marginal categories that can be isolated from the mainstream of Egyptian logistics, and they are a far cry from attempting to replace the Soviet Union by some other state, or consortium of states, as a main weapons supplier. Apart from the problem of quantities cited above, which in itself makes such a move unfeasible, any drastic changeover or radical diversification program would create a logistical nightmare that would paralyze the Egyptian forces for years to come. Countries much more sophisticated technologically than Egypt—like the members of NATO—have made major efforts recently to move in the opposite direction, toward uniformity, with this very consideration in mind. To the degree, therefore, that diversification is practicable under Egyptian conditions, it would not suffice to phase out dependence upon the USSR as a main source of military hardware.

What the Egyptian President apparently has in mind, then, is not the replacement of the Soviet Union as his main weapons donor by one or several other countries, but rather the addition of Western technology to an ongoing base of Soviet-manufactured hardware. Cairo's gain from such a move is twofold: by becoming a market for Western weapons it can exert influence in countries where public sympathy has tended so far to favor Israel; and the acquisition of such arms will enable the Egyptian forces to become acquainted with the very same technology that constitutes the mainstay of the Israeli army (just as, on the Israeli side, Soviet-manufactured equipment captured from Egypt and Syria has proved useful in developing appropriate counter-measures).

II

These considerations alone render highly suspect the constantly reiterated assertion that Egypt is willing or able to "break" with the Soviet Union, or that Moscow, in anticipation or as a result of such a shift of allegience, has "penalized" Egypt by placing an embargo upon the military items required by Cairo. Precisely the same view, it may be remembered, was presented to the Western public during the period from the summer of 1972 to the early fall of 1973, following the "expulsion" of Soviet experts from Egypt in July 1972. Yet evidence now revealed about the real course of events then should cause everyone to think twice about today's "rupture."

On the first anniversary of the October 1973 war, the Cairo weekly *Rose al-Yusuf*, the organ of Egypt's single party, the Arab Socialist Union, published excerpts from a book by its military correspondent, 'Abd al-Satar al-Tawila, called *The Six-Hour War According to a Military Correspondent's Diary*. According to al-Tawila (who, the paper explained, was instructed by the President personally in revising the book and given access to secret documents), Sadat engaged in a "brilliant plan of political camouflage prior to the October war." The central element in this "Egyp-

* *Al-Hawadith* (Beirut), August 21, 1975, second part of an interview given by President Anwar al-Sadat to Salim al-Lawzi, chief editor of the magazine, as reported by Cairo M.E.N.A. in Arabic, August 21, 1975

† Agence France Presse, December 9, 1975.

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tian deception plan" was the exploitation of the spurious issue of Soviet arms supply to Egypt and a deliberate falsification of the true state of Soviet-Egyptian relations. Al-Tawila's account is worth quoting at length:

> The various government agencies spread rumors and stories that were exaggerated, to say the least, about deficiencies, both quantitative and qualitative, regarding the weapons required to begin the battle against Israel, at the very time when the two parties—Egypt and the USSR—had reached agreement concerning the supply of quantities of arms during the second half of 1973—weapons which, in fact, were beginning to arrive. And there came a time when we saw how the majority of habitués of Egyptian and Arab coffee houses, particularly in Beirut, turned into arms experts and babbled about shortages in this or that type of hardware. And speaking in the jargon of the scientist and the expert, they would say that the Soviets were refusing to supply Egypt with missiles of a certain type and were even cutting off the supply of spare parts in such a manner that our planes, for example, had turned into useless scrap and were unable to fly, not to speak of combating the Phantom and the Mirage. These self-styled arms experts went deeply into the question of offensive and defensive weapons, inventing arbitrary differences between them while . . . defensive anti-aircraft missiles actually played an offensive role during the war of October 6. Moreover, the Egyptian press frequently gave prominence to an inclination [in Cairo] to seek arms in the West. And while it is correct that it is possible to buy some categories of hardware in the West, to equip a whole army with weapons from the West would mean, simply, that the date of the expected battle remains far off, i.e., until such time as the Egyptian army could be trained in the use of such new hardware. . . . All this talk about armaments and their shortage was intended to create the impression in the ranks of the enemy that one of the reasons why Egypt was incapable of starting war was the absence of high-quality weapons. . . . And the whole world was taken by surprise when zero hour arrived. A Pentagon spokesman expressed this surprise when he said: "They"—i.e., the Israelis—"did not suspect the presence of such quantities and such categories of Soviet weapons in Egyptian and Syrian hands, in view of the incessantly repeated Arab complaint that the Soviets were refusing to supply these two countries with advanced offensive weapons in sufficient quantities."

Al-Tawila then proceeds to explain how, in addition to thus spreading what intelligence services call disinformation concerning Soviet arms supplies to Egypt, "the Egyptian camouflage to deceive the enemy was expanded to include Egyptian-Soviet relations":

> This was done to such an extent that many among the Arabs themselves cast doubt upon Egyptian-Soviet friendship and its sincerity, and allegations were spread concerning Soviet nonsupport for the Arabs in their struggle. The episode of July 1972, when Egypt decided to make do without Soviet experts, was exploited and many intentionally or unintentionally failed to hear the words of President Sadat and his repeated emphasis that this episode was no more than "an interlude with our friend," as always happens among friends. Now we already know that one of the reasons for the willingness to make do without the Soviet experts was so that preparations could be made for the beginning of a battle that would bear the character of a 100 per-cent Egyptian decision, using 100 per-cent Egyptian forces. However, these experts had fulfilled an important task in connection with the network of missiles and other delicate weapons. The Egyptian deception campaign, moreover, was able to reap considerable benefit from this episode—the willingness to make do without the Soviet experts—because it raised questions about the genuineness of the regime's threats to resort to war; after all, how would the Egyptian army be able to fight without the presence of thousands of Russian experts, distributed among all the most important weapons sectors of the army so as to train [the army] in their use and even to operate some of this hardware themselves?
>
> In addition, the [deception] campaign benefited also from the allegations and suspicions that were spread in the Arab world, as if this [willingness to do without Soviet experts] had been the result of a secret agreement with the U.S. and its friends in the region, whereby a peace arrangement would be prepared in return for the removal of the Soviet military presence. If that was the case, why, then, no war was to be expected, nor anything like a war—yet all the time preparations were continuing feverishly to open the battle; and when the war started in fact, there was the additional surprise that unlimited Soviet support was extended both in the international arena and in the area of military equipment. The same Pentagon spokesman, on the morrow of the battle, expressed his opinion about this surprise: "We never imagined that the Soviet Union would do what it has done, after the tough verbal campaigns waged against it in the Arab world, and after the cooling of relations with Cairo following the exodus of the Soviets."*

INDEED, there is now good reason to believe that the "expulsion" of Soviet experts during the summer of 1972 was not a unilateral Egyptian move against Moscow, but a triangular arrangement among Moscow, Cairo, and Damascus. According to President Sadat's close friend Ihsan 'Abd al-Quddus: "Actually, the very Soviet experts who had served in Egypt were trans-

* *Rose al-Yusuf*, October 7, 1974. President Sadat himself, in an interview broadcast by Cairo Radio in Arabic on October 24, 1975, has confirmed al-Tawila's version, calling the 1972 "expulsion" of Soviet experts "a strategic cover . . . a splendid strategic distraction for our going to war."

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ferred to Syria. Egypt approved this Syrian stand, in fact supported it, because the national interests required the continued existence of Soviet experts in the region. . . ."*

The relevance of these disclosures—universally ignored in the West—is all the greater today when an uncannily similar scenario is being presented of an Egyptian-Soviet "rift" accompanied by a halt, or at least a major slowdown, of the flow of Soviet weapons to Cairo.

Moreover, not only is there evidence to cast serious doubt on the belief in an irreversible rupture between Moscow and Cairo; there is also documentation that equally challenges the claim that the United States has outmaneuvered the Russians in the contest for influence over Egypt. In fact, there are grounds for thinking that Sadat's cooperation with Secretary Kissinger has occurred not merely with the compliance but even at the behest of the Soviet Union. Sadat himself stated a short time ago, in an interview again ignored in the West:

> In Moscow they know facts as much as I do. They told Nasser more than once, when he met them in Moscow following the 1967 defeat: "Go and talk to the Americans." During the four times that I went to Moscow as President, they used to tell me: "Go and contact, open a dialogue, and talk to the Americans." Gromyko also told Isma'il Fahmi: "The United States owns the essential cards in this game." This is a clear fact to all. . . .†

Sadat's remarks were anticipated by the Soviet "analyst" Y. Primakov, writing a few years earlier in the Soviet magazine, *USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology*, and by his colleague, I. Beliaiev. The gist of their argument was that the huge investments of American oil interests in the Middle East would in the long run work in the Arabs' favor, since the U.S. policy of containing the Soviet Union, and hence the Soviet Union's clients, might prove incompatible with the goal of insuring the security of the oil-transit lines controlled by the Arab states. Primakov and Beliaiev predicted that the United States would be pressured by these domestic oil interests into doing for the Arabs what they had been unable to do for themselves and what the Soviet Union could not do for them: namely, coerce Israel into a unilateral withdrawal. The Kremlin, for its own naval reasons, wanted Israel to be pushed away from the Suez Canal and that waterway to be reopened.

This, of course, is more or less what has happened in the last few years, with the oil embargo that accompanied the October 1973 war acting as a dramatic stimulant to the process. However, the main point here is that, as Primakov and Beliaiev make clear, influential Soviet circles for some time have been advocating precisely the policy—reliance on the United States—which Sadat has followed, and which, as he states, Soviet leaders themselves urged upon him.**

It is only in the light of these considerations that one can understand, really, why the Soviet Union has reacted with such restraint and imperturbability to the repeated denunciations and "expulsions" it has suffered at the hands of the Egyptians, including most recently the announcement curtailing Soviet naval facilities in Egyptian ports. (While Soviet vessels apparently are ceasing to use the Alexandria docks, the situation at the Mersa Matruh base seems to have been left deliberately unclear.††) It is only in the light of the same considerations, moreover, that one can understand such otherwise bizarre occurrences as the backing given to the interim Sinai Agreement—a supposed "victory" for American diplomacy and a mortifying defeat for the Soviet Union—by Israel's New Communist List, a party known for its slavish obedience to the Moscow line; or, an even stranger occurrence, the Soviet vote in the UN Security Council (on October 23, 1975), in favor of the prolongation of the UNEF mandate in the Sinai, when, by casting a negative vote, the Russians could have vetoed the agreement.

THE truth is that the Soviet Union has little to lose and much to gain by allowing the U.S. to get for Egypt through negotiation what the Arabs and the Russians have been unable to achieve through military confrontation. Moscow can, first of all, disembarrass itself of the constant Arab pressure concerning Russia's supposed "fraternal duty" to help recover the Sinai and the Golan. Second, there are more tangible immediate benefits, such as the opening of the Suez Canal, whose present dimensions are sufficient to accommodate the two helicopter carriers of the Soviet Mediterranean squadron but not the assault carriers of the U.S. Sixth Fleet.

Finally, even in the long run the process of step-by-step diplomacy in the Middle East is unlikely, in the Soviet view, to result in a lasting major gain for the United States at the expense of the USSR.

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* *Al-Ahram*, October 31, 1975. The authoritative Cairo journal, *Al-Akhbar*, subsequently revealed (March 5, 1976) that these Soviet experts actually participated, in one form or another, in the 1973 war on the Golan front.

† *Al-Hawadith* (Beirut), August 15, 1975, pp. 20-25, first part of interview given by President Anwar al-Sadat to Salim al-Lawzi, chief editor of the magazine.

** For details on Primakov's and Beliaiev's views, see my "Soviet Global Policy and the Middle East," in *Naval War College Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, September 1971, pp. 19–29. Significantly, both of these Soviet emissaries paid a "low-profile" visit to Egypt late last year.

†† Interestingly enough, while headlines now proclaim that Egypt is ousting Soviet vessels, for three-and-a-half years following the "expulsion" of Soviet experts, the American public never was informed of Russia's continued use of these Egyptian naval facilities. Nor was it told of Sadat's revelation that he had secretly "extended the period of the naval facilities granted to the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean to 1978. . . . However, equilibrium absolutely does not mean that I shall be granting similar concessions to the Americans." See *Le Monde*, December 10, 1975.

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The essence of Kissinger's approach has been to woo the clients of the Soviet Union by offering them what they were unable to obtain by war, namely portions of territory currently under the control of a state friendly to the West. It is thus *America's* credibility that is being put to the test constantly, while the Soviet Union can sit on the sidelines and wait patiently, since the Kremlin has promised only to put pressure on the U.S. to deliver, rather than undertaking to do so itself. The whole process costs the Soviet Union nothing, while the United States is in a position of having to pressure a friend and ally to take measures which the latter perceives as inimical to its vital national interests. Moreover, the process is necessarily open-ended, with each "victory" for the United States—i.e., another territorial concession by Israel—leading inexorably to a demand for more. Sadat's confidant, Ihsan 'Abd al-Quddus, has put it this way (*Al-Ahram*, November 14, 1975):

> Israel is experiencing a feeling of waning or "withering." This withering will not stop even if Israel withdraws to the 1967 borders, even if it recognizes the rights of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza, and even if it recognizes the PLO. . . . The Arab side . . . has been able to combine Washington and Moscow in one stand. . . . This waning may make Israel face the Security Council Resolution of 1948 which calls for returning the Arab lands to their owners or compensating for them. . . . The Arabs, of course, refuse any compensation and insist on recovering the land, that is, they are compelling Israel to return to the Partition Resolution [of 1947].

III

YET the USSR has been doing more—far more—than sitting on the sidelines and watching these processes unfold. Impressions propagated in the Western press to the contrary notwithstanding, from the October 1973 war to the present, the flow of weapons from the Soviet Union to the Egyptian armed forces has been considerable.

On October 6, 1975, the Egyptian Minister of War and Deputy Premier, General Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jamasi, declared: "I cannot reveal the arms we have, but I reassure you that what we have greatly *exceeds* what we had before October 6, 1973" [emphasis added]. Since the Soviet air- and sea-lift to Egypt during the October 1973 war, extensive though it was, could not have come close to replacing all the equipment lost in the war, it follows that, if the Egyptian Minister of War now speaks of an armaments level "greatly" exceeding the matériel available prior to the war, there must have been major Soviet shipments of equipment dispatched *during 1974-76*, the very period when the Egyptian-Soviet "rift" allegedly reached its peak.

And, in fact, a close examination of Soviet weapons deliveries to Egypt during the two periods of alleged rift, 1972-73 and 1974-76, shows considerable Soviet military reinforcement of Egypt, both quantitative and qualitative.*

In the first period of "rift," 1972-73, prior to the Egyptian attack on Yom Kippur, the Soviet Union modernized and enlarged Egypt's armored units by supplying almost 600 additional tanks, many of these consisting of an improved model of the T-62, the Warsaw Pact's main battle tank, equipped with night-vision instrumentation, and the remainder including more T-54/55's, as well as further units of the amphibious PT-76. These shipments enabled Egypt to continue phasing out the aging T-34 and provided Cairo with an armored force much more up-to-date and nearly 50 percent larger than that of Hungary (an ally of the USSR and a typical member of the Warsaw Pact). During the same time span, Egypt received over 250 new Soviet armored personnel carriers, many of them amphibious, and half-tracks, particularly of improved categories.

Similarly with artillery, aircraft, and naval units. The USSR equipped Egypt in this period with some 300 additional field guns, medium guns, and heavy mortars, as well as approximately 100 more Soviet aircraft (including 72 Soviet-operated MiG-21's that were handed over to the Egyptian air force after the departure in July 1972 of Soviet combat personnel). The additional planes included all-weather and night-flying versions of the MiG-21 (MF), and more helicopters. About 20 new naval units were also dispatched to Egypt, including MTB's, landing craft, a minesweeper, and a Komar.

However, the largest and most significant influx took place in the area of modern missiles: in the period leading up to the Yom Kippur war, Egypt received several hundred anti-tank missile systems, predominantly of the AT-3 Sagger type, but also

* Data for this analysis can be found in many open sources, although care has to be exercised, since there are incompatibilities and contradictions in some instances among the publications cited. Such open sources include: *The Military Balance*, London International Institute for Strategic Studies (1972-73 to 1975-76) and the IISS's journal, *Survival*, and its *Adelphi Papers; Aviation Week and Space Technology; The Arms Trade Registers: The Arms Trade with the Third World*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the same Institute's *World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook; The International Transfer of Conventional Arms*, 1974, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and ACDA's subsequent *World Military Expenditures and Arms Trade 1963–1973* (and 1965–1974); *Jane's All the World's Aircraft, Jane's Fighting Ships, Jane's Weapons Systems; Military Review*, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; *Naval War College Review*; *Brassey's Annual*; the columns of Drew Middleton in the New York *Times*; the books on the Yom Kippur war by Chaim Herzog, Zev Schiff, Mohamed Heikal, and the Insight Team of the London *Sunday Times*; and the columns of the military correspondents of the Hebrew and Arabic press, as well as such French-language publications as *Défense Nationale*; and also recent numbers of the London *Economist*.

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including further AT-2 Swatters and AT-1 Snappers. With regard to tactical surface-to-surface missiles, the already extant FROG-3 and FROG-7 units were supplemented with an additional number of Samlets, and the first dozen Scud (B) launchers also arrived at this time. Moreover, the Soviet Union supplemented the quite substantial numbers of SA-2 and SA-3 launchers already emplaced in Egypt (particularly the latter), and supplied a significant number of the subsequently famous SA-6 mobile triple-launchers, one of the newest and most effective weapons in the Soviet anti-aircraft arsenal. In addition, several hundred SA-7 (Strela) infantry-borne anti-aircraft missile systems arrived, supplemented by further quantities of the rapid-firing ZSU-23-24 anti-aircraft gun, and other anti-aircraft artillery, as well as the corresponding missile- and gun-radars.

What makes this massive injection of Soviet hardware even more impressive is that delivery was concentrated into a period of a scant five months or so, leading up to the war—which thus can be seen to have been prepared with the full connivance and collusion of the Soviet Union. One is at a loss to explain how this feverish arming of a country well outside the limits of the Warsaw Pact (and at a pace far exceeding that enjoyed by Communist allies of the USSR) can be squared with the portrayal by Western observers of a deep conflict between Moscow and Cairo.

As for the second, and supposedly "irreparable," Soviet-Egyptian rift of 1974-76, the supply of Russian hardware to Cairo within this period has been scarcely less remarkable than in 1972-73. During the October 1973 war itself, the USSR sea-and air-lifted hundreds of tanks to Egypt, nearly one-half being modern T-62's, to replace Egyptian battle losses. More significantly, since then, Egypt has received in the neighborhood of 1,000 tanks of Soviet manufacture, almost one-half of them T-62's (with some of the armor coming indirectly, via Algeria and Yugoslavia).

Nearly 200 Soviet amphibious APC's were sea- and air-lifted during the October 1973 war, and a similar number have arrived in Egypt during 1974-76, a few of them from Algeria. Many full-track armored vehicles now in Egypt came off the Soviet assembly lines as recently as last year.

Well over 100 artillery pieces were sea- and air-lifted to Egypt by the USSR during the 1973 war, and at least as many have arrived from the Soviet Union since then.

With regard to surface-to-air missile systems, Egypt's anti-aircraft network, despite considerable losses during the 1973 war, has been expanded now to some 150 batteries of SA-2's, SA-3's, and (improved) mobile SA-6's, a total significantly in excess of the amount in Egypt's possession on October 6, 1973. Well over 60 per cent of the additional batteries have arrived during 1973-76. A large number of the infantry-borne SA-7's and of the anti-tank Saggers also arrived both during the war and in the subsequent period, in addition to anti-aircraft artillery and the relevant radar equipment.

Egypt's surface-to-surface missile capacity has also been expanded vastly, to a total of several hundred FROGs and Scuds (several dozen of the latter with the range and capacity to inflict heavy casualties upon Israel's population centers). These deliveries have continued from 1973 onward.

Perhaps most important of all are combat aircraft, including helicopters and military transports. Egypt has received in excess of 100 Soviet-made planes in the last years, some during the war but the great majority since then, with some coming via Algeria and various East European countries but most arriving directly from the Soviet Union. Although that number is somewhat short of Egypt's losses in October 1973, the *quality* of the planes is considerably superior, including reportedly not only some Su-20's (Fitter C), a swing-wing plane appearing for the first time outside the Warsaw Pact area, but, most significantly, the MiG-23, of which some 50 are on order from the Soviet Union and at least 30 already are in Egypt (arriving during the last year). Remarkably enough, the MiG-23's ordered by Egypt constitute at least 20 per cent of the gross increase in the Soviet MiG-23 inventory last year, with a considerable proportion of the remainder going to Syria and other Arab countries, while, so far as is known, *no* MiG-23's have been deployed to date in such key countries of the Warsaw Pact as Poland, Czechoslovakia, or East Germany.

The value of Soviet-made weapons received by Egypt *during the most recent period alone* is believed to exceed $1 billion.

While it may be possible to quibble over precise numbers in this accounting, the total picture speaks for itself. Allegations of a Soviet embargo, or near-embargo, or of an irreversible "breach" between Cairo and Moscow, simply do not jibe with this picture. On the contrary, far from Egypt's being an object of Soviet anger, it would appear that in some areas, Egypt is receiving preferred treatment from the Soviet Union, at the expense of the latter's East European allies.

IV

There is, then, convincing evidence, largely ignored by Western observers, that the notion of a "final" or irreversible shift by Cairo away from the USSR and into the arms of the U.S. is, to say the least, highly premature, and that within a reasonable span of time (and irrespective of Western actions), Egypt and the Soviet Union may once again be vibrating in harmony. None of this is meant to suggest that there are no differences of opinion within the Soviet leadership as to the desirability and wisdom of

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continued Soviet support of Egypt. Nor does it deny that relations between the two countries have often been less than ideal. Since the Soviet Union has the upper hand with regard to weapons deliveries, it would be surprising if, in periods of stress, it did not invoke such tactics as "technical delays" in delivery schedules, shortfalls in spare parts and ammunition, or delays in the licensing of indigenous Egyptian production of Russian hardware. However, there is a world of difference between such short-term tactics, built into the donor-recipient relation, and a *de facto* Soviet embargo. The latter has not been imposed during the periods surveyed.

It should be noted, moreover, that during recent weeks, when the Western public's gaze was riveted firmly on a smiling President Sadat making overtures to Europe and America, and on an amiable Vice President Husni Mubarak feasting in China, some highly significant developments of a very different character remained practically unreported. For instance, a high-level Egyptian delegation concluded negotiations in Moscow with the signature of a trade agreement to the tune of about two-thirds of a billion dollars! It should be stressed that payment for Soviet weapons is invariably arranged through barter agreements of this type, and that the successful culmination of these negotiations strongly suggests that the issue of Egyptian debts resulting from earlier Soviet arms transfers—a question over which much ink has been spilled—has been settled. Even more interesting is the fact that at about the same time, following the death of the Soviet defense minister, Marshal Grechko, Egypt sent to the funeral no less a personality than Deputy Premier and Minister of War, General Muhammad 'Abd al-Ghani al-Jamasi—surely an odd way of protesting a Soviet "arms embargo." (Together with the barter agreement, this move is more likely to signify the start of new arms negotiations.)

WHAT remains to be explained is the reason for the curious discrepancy between the public portrayal of Egyptian-Soviet relations and the far less reassuring reality revealed by the evidence. One explanation has been offered by Lutfi al-Khuli in *Al-Ahram*, February 11, 1976:

> U.S.-Israeli coordination is no longer "total." . . . In view of this, Egypt has decided that the political response to the new reality requires that Egyptian-Soviet coordination should also stop being "total" and be confined only to the general outlines. Otherwise, the Israeli-U.S. contradictions would not continue and there would be again an Arab-Soviet front facing an Israeli-U.S. front. Egypt seems to welcome a certain degree of coordination with the Soviets provided that the Soviet reaction does not *exceed the limits of Egypt's visualization of the effect on mutual coordination between Tel Aviv and Washington* [emphasis added].

Al-Khuli is saying, simply, that Egypt wishes the Soviet leadership to collude in playing down the actual degree of intimacy between the two regimes, since any public awareness of the actual state of affairs might reverse the trend of estrangement between the United States and Israel which President Sadat had fostered so successfully. (How far the Kremlin is prepared to continue accepting such a role, only time will tell.)

Whether or not this explanation constitutes the key to the discrepancies noted, the fact is that the "rift" between Egypt and the Soviet Union *has* become an accepted working hypothesis of policymakers (and the media) in the West, and especially in the United States. Insofar as it is based on dubious assumptions—and all the evidence suggests that it is—this hypothesis almost certainly will lead to dangerous conclusions and very harmful consequences.

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An Answer to Lillian Hellman

Nathan Glazer

LILLIAN HELLMAN, in *Scoundrel Time*,* tells the story of her appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952, and tells something, in flashbacks, of her political life, insofar as it involved dealings with Communists or persons she thought were Communists. In the process, she challenges those of us who did not come to her defense and the defense of others who were pilloried by the Committee and subsequently lost their jobs or, more seriously, were jailed for refusing to answer questions before congressional committees and did not defend themselves by pleading the Fifth Amendment. One of these was the writer Dashiell Hammett, with whom she lived. He had already gone to jail and been released, sick and in debt to the Internal Revenue Service, when Lillian Hellman was subpoenaed, at a moment when Clifford Odets, Elia Kazan, and others were also being questioned, principally it appears about Hollywood.

Lillian Hellman cannot understand how intellectuals like Lionel and Diana Trilling could have believed Whittaker Chambers. She does not understand how magazines like *Partisan Review* and COMMENTARY could have taken the positions they did in the 1950's:

> *Partisan Review*, although through the years it has published many, many pieces protesting the punishment of dissidents in Eastern Europe, made no protest when people in this country were jailed or ruined. . . . COMMENTARY didn't do anything. No editor or contributor ever protested against McCarthy. . . .
>
> There were many thoughtful and distinguished men and women on both magazines. None of them, as far as I know, has yet found it a part of conscience to admit that their cold-war anti-Communism was perverted, possibly against their wishes, in the Vietnam war and then into the reign of Nixon, their unwanted but inevitable leader.

It is not Lillian Hellman alone who is calling some of us to task—those of us who believed then (and believe now) that the Rosenbergs and Hiss were guilty, that people forced to appear before the congressional committees investigating Communism should have told the truth, and that witnesses who told the truth deserved more sympathy than witnesses who remained silent and pleaded the Fifth Amendment. Many young people who were scarcely born at the time and have now become historians of what they conceive of as the dread and gray 1950's, are also calling us to account. Those of us who said, yes, the Rosenbergs are guilty, Hiss is lying, and Communism is a more serious threat to liberty than the congressional committees investigating it, now find ourselves being asked, as Lillian Hellman puts it, to "admit" that our actions contributed to Vietnam and to the "reign of Nixon."

For a new "truth" is being created about the 1950's—by the memoirs of some of those who lived in that period, but in greater part by the unending flow of volumes of apparently serious research revising the history of World War II and its aftermath (the flow will increase now that the new laws and rules affecting the release of confidential government reports lead to an ever greater volume of material for scholars to scrutinize). Young scholars of any generation tend to have a common point of view. After all, they have lived through the same kinds of times and the same kinds of experiences. And young scholars in general now believe that the congressional committees investigating Communism represented a totally unjustified attack on the freedom of thought, speech, and action of progressive-minded Americans, undertaken only for mean political motives, and that those investigations posed a greater danger to this country's liberties than Communism ever did. Those of us who did not stand single-mindedly against this threat were culpable, guilty of a new "treason of the intellectuals."

We are thus called to a reexamination of our behavior, our motives, our political judgment. The fact that what Lillian Hellman says about COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review* is untrue—the fact that articles against McCarthyism were pub-

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* Little, Brown, 155 pp., $7.95.

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lished in both magazines—should not have to be mentioned in any honest discussion. To be forced to defend oneself in this way is no less demeaning than being forced to sign a loyalty oath. I could list such articles, including one by myself in COMMENTARY when I was a member of the editorial staff, but that would be beside the point. For opposition to McCarthyism was so taken for granted by magazines like COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review* that the main intellectual contribution they could make was to examine and clarify the many questions surrounding the phenomenon—questions like the sources of McCarthyism, the reasons for its appeal, and the precise nature of the political danger it represented. (Lillian Hellman still thinks that McCarthyism was an attempt "to destroy the remnants of Roosevelt and his sometimes advanced work.")

At the same time we believed there was a legitimate public interest in knowing what the role of Communists was in government and the media of information and entertainment. But our own preference was to expose Communism in the pages of the *New Leader* and COMMENTARY, rather than before Congressmen for whom we had no political or any other kind of sympathy. Indeed, the fact that the committees made exposure of Communist connections and sympathies so damaging often inhibited us in describing Communists and Communist sympathizers for what they were.

Nevertheless, that some of us wrote articles against and about McCarthy or HUAC or the "radical Right" or restrained ourselves in this period from criticizing Communists or Communist sympathizers, will not get us off the hook so easily if indeed we failed to rise to a major threat to American liberty, if we abandoned fellow intellectuals to the bigotry of the American people and their elected leaders, or if we (again to quote Lillian Hellman) "found in the sins of Stalin Communism . . . the excuse to join those who should have been [our] hereditary enemies."

OF COURSE there are enemies and enemies. Leafing through this book, one sees a picture of Lillian Hellman at the Waldorf meeting in March 1949—the Cultural and Scientific Congress for World Peace. Her argument is that the defense of freedom of thought and speech required the defense of those who were criticized for participating in such a meeting. I thought then—and I believe now—that the defense of freedom required one to expose the Communist organizers of this meeting, required one to demonstrate the obscenity of speaking of world peace under the auspices of a movement whose leaders ran a huge system of slave-camps for dissenters, who extirpated even the most modest efforts at independence of mind, who just about then were executing the leading Jewish poets and writers of Russia (even though these poets and writers had served them well). What was Lillian Hellman doing in that company? Where did the threat to freedom lie—with those who picketed the meeting and exposed it; or with those who, out of ignorance or for some other reason, were willing to join in a scheme designed by Communists to advance the interests of the greatest tyranny in the world? I believe the defenders of freedom belonged outside the meeting, even if some of us preferred to write about it rather than picket it. For Lillian Hellman, participation in such a meeting still seems nothing to be ashamed of.

It was—and is—inconceivable to her that the Communists she knew could be *the* enemy. Yet the Communists were certainly connected to, defended, apologized for, and advanced the interests of an awesome power that was, after the defeat of Hitler, unquestionably *the* enemy of freedom throughout the world. The Communists had destroyed the possibilities of democracy in Eastern Europe, and they were threatening to expand their power into Greece, Turkey, Italy, and France, by instigated civil war, or internal subversion, or perhaps by direct military attack. In the face of this danger, what attitude to Communists at home was legitimate? This was a far more difficult question for liberals than Lillian Hellman lets on. Liberals and progressives who had learned about Communism and Communists at first hand could be very tough in dealing with them locally—one recalls the history of the NAACP, which tolerated no Communist-controlled chapters, and the actions of the CIO in driving the Communist-controlled unions out of its own organization. Indeed, I would guess that considerably less due process was accorded Communists in the CIO than to those appearing before congressional investigating committees.

There were serious issues, then, in considering what actions against domestic Communists were justified by the real threat of Communists armed with state power. These issues disappear in Lillian Hellman's account; she can find no justification for a public concern with Communism. The problem of domestic Communism, it is true, was often trivialized and sensationalized by the congressional committees, where almost any individual who could be gotten to take the Fifth Amendment, no matter how humble his role in life, or how modest the harm he could have done or might do, was regularly dragged before the spotlights to serve the political ambitions of the legislators.

But certainly one of the first steps in determining what might or might not be legitimate in dealing with the threat of Communism was to acquire information. And here I do not speak of the information that could come out of the necessarily inadequate procedures of congressional investigating committees (in almost *all* committees, whether of the Left or the Right, as we have been reminded by the recent congressional investigations of the CIA, political jockeying limits the search for truth). I am thinking of the information thought-

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ful and intelligent persons like Lillian Hellman could have contributed. Perhaps *Communism* in the world was a threat but *Communists* at home were not? Very well, let us hear about it.

But that brings us to another, and the most crucial, of the problems which agitated people at the time: whatever one thought of the congressional committees, what should one have done when called to testify—tell the truth, or be silent? Lillian Hellman puts it another way: should one have been a "friendly witness" or not? The first course meant to tell the truth, but it also meant telling about one's politics and the politics of one's friends and (possibly) causing them harm. The second course meant either to risk jail (by being silent and therefore exposing oneself to charges of contempt) or to escape jail but to risk reputation and livelihood (by pleading the Fifth Amendment—refusal to speak on grounds of self-incrimination).

The opportunity to plead the Fifth Amendment was an accidental result of the Smith Act, under which being a member of the Communist party *might* have been illegal. As a matter of fact, no ordinary member of the Communist party, or even prominent person who was an ordinary member, was ever prosecuted for membership in the party, but there could be lesser penalties—not being allowed to work in government, for example, or not being able to get a passport. On the other hand, pleading the Fifth Amendment opened one to the same penalties. And both courses of action opened one to sanctions by private groups and individuals who could deprive one of a livelihood.

I present the matter as I see it—as a troublesome dilemma. Only members of the party had no problem about what to do: they were under orders to remain silent, and to present themselves, even while taking the Fifth Amendment, as martyrs to free speech. But former Communists who had broken sharply with the party were often eager and willing to tell what they knew; and even when they were not eager, they often considered it their duty. Of course people who were sympathetic to Communism or Communists, but were not Communists themselves, were neither under orders to remain silent nor eager to talk, and might do one or another for any number of reasons.

Even this minimal degree of complexity disappears in Lillian Hellman's account. To her, all those who testified were simple villains, worried only about saving their well-paid jobs and prominent careers (she suggests they were more frightened than she was because of their "immigrant" origins, as against her own self-confident Americanism), while those who took the Fifth Amendment were heroes. Now the latter included at least some Communists—people, that is, who supported, defended, and apologized for "the sins of Stalin Communism." Yet it is not they who are the "scoundrels" of *Scoundrel Time*. The "scoundrels" are the ex-Communists, the people who testified. No doubt some of them, as Lillian Hellman charges, were testifying only to save their skins. But that there could have been any other motivation—disgust with the Communists and their tactics, remorse at having worked for a totalitarian movement, the desire to explain oneself and one's behavior—does not occur to Lillian Hellman and does not moderate her vindictive scorn for the "friendly witness," even at this date, when she claims to know what Stalinism was and did.

As for how she herself behaved, her account of just what she did, and why, is not very clear. She offered in a letter to tell the Committee anything it wanted to know about her, so long as it desisted from questioning her about others. If the Committee insisted on questioning her about others, she would take the Fifth Amendment. The Committee did, and she did.

The rest of the story is fuzzy. First, it appears that she answered enough questions so that her refusal to answer others by taking the Fifth Amendment opened her to prosecution for contempt; nevertheless, the Committee did not bring charges against her. Second, she suggests that despite the fact that she took the Fifth Amendment, she broke new ground in the strategies of witnesses before the Committee. Thus, she reports that a man in the audience during her appearance said loudly, "Thank God somebody had the guts to do it." One is puzzled. Do what? She has just explained that she had taken the Fifth Amendment in refusing to answer a question (based on the testimony of a "friendly witness") as to whether she had been present at a certain meeting (she tells us she hadn't), and as to whether she was a member of the Communist party (she tells us she was not). So one is left wondering what new ground was broken, and just what she had the "guts" to do.

One factor in determining how one responded to the committees was the extent to which a real threat to freedom in the world could be divorced from those who at home had defended or were still defending or working to advance—for whatever reason—the interests of the tyranny that was the source of this threat; and one approach to this problem, as I have already suggested, was simply to spread a better understanding of domestic Communism—the nature of the party, the claims it made upon members, the degree of its power to influence organizations, to affect public opinion, and the like. These were questions which aroused the greatest interest and passion at the time. One could take the position that it was no one's business what Communism in the United States was or was not; or that whoever's business it might be, it was not the business of congressional committees composed of narrow-minded and ambitious politicians.

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I am not sure whether Lillian Hellman takes the first position: she says a number of times that she is aware of the "sins" of "Stalin Communism" and it might thus seem to her that there was a legitimate public interest in knowing about Communism so as to devise some proper course in dealing with it. On this point, however, she says that she had little to offer, except perhaps some potential victims to the Committee's appetite for public exposure.

Yet by her own account today, she *was* in a position to contribute to public understanding of Communism. She had been active, she tells us, in Henry Wallace's campaign for the Presidency in 1948, and so dismayed had she been by the role of the Communists in that campaign that she arranged to meet with leading officials of the Communist party in an effort to persuade them to leave Wallace's Progressive party alone. Certainly there was a legitimate public interest in knowing this story in 1952. Many liberals then were unaware of the manipulation of the Wallace campaign by Communists. To have told this story, she believes, would have been to rat on her friends. So she was silent in print, and took the Fifth Amendment before the Committee. Yet the Wallace campaign had been taken over by the Communists for a simple reason, to advance the interests of Stalinist totalitarianism. What was the responsibility of an intellectual at that time? Was it not to tell the truth? She was silent then about a key issue in American politics; she is remarkably coy now. Yet if she and others had fulfilled their responsibility as writers and intellectuals then, what role would have been left for the congressional committees, and who would have supported them? She never dreams of asking herself what *her* responsibility was as a writer and an intellectual supposedly committed to the truth and to telling the truth. She is entirely pleased with what she did instead of telling the truth: the righteous course, in her view then as now, and the only way to defend freedom, was to remain silent and excoriate the Committee.

History is now being rewritten so that the enemy of freedom since World War II, and even in World War II, not to mention today, becomes the United States. I refer less to Lillian Hellman's account, which is personal and not much concerned with the rewriting of history, than to a larger effort in which her account will presumably be embedded. Indeed, she has insured that it will be so embedded by publishing it together with an introduction by Garry Wills. For Wills, even the occasional grays of Miss Hellman's account are too much. To him American policy in the postwar period—a policy which contributed to the survival of the small island of democracy that still exists in the world—was quite simply a crime: "A newly aggressive Truman had launched the cold war in the spring of 1947 with his plan to 'rescue' Greece and Turkey," he tells us. "We had a world to save with just those plans—from NATO to the Korean war. . . ." One reads such passages—and many others—in astonishment. Garry Wills believes that Greece and Turkey did not need to be rescued, that one of America's "plans" was the Korean war. It seems that he prefers the political condition of, say, Bulgaria and North Korea to that of Greece and Turkey. He tells us with no hint of embarrassment that he prefers Communist totalitarianism to democracy. And what does Lillian Hellman make of the introduction that disgraces her memoir? Perhaps it was hard to tell in 1952 just who were the principal enemies of freedom then. Is it so hard to tell in 1976?

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American Jewish Writing, Act II

Ruth R. Wisse

THE career of American Jewish literature would seem to have reached a turning point. Over the past three decades, Jewish writers have made their way into the mainstream of American fiction, and have now been canonized in university curricula. A swell of anthologies, secondary studies, and courses is evidence of a success achieved and acknowledged—a success not only of individual writers admired for their particular talents, but of what is generally seen as an entire cultural movement or school. Despite an occasional objection (like that of the late Philip Rahv) to "the ignorant and even malicious idea that such a school exists," no one would seriously deny that the years since the end of World War II have been fat ones for American Jewish writing, and few would any longer deny that those years seem to be coming to an end. But where some critics see an imminent decline of the genre as a whole, others anticipate spirited new developments.

Certainly a case can be made for the exhaustion of an "American Jewish" approach or an "American Jewish" subject matter. The twin themes of marginality and victimization, which have come to be associated in Western literature with the Jew, have been brought to maturity in this country in the work of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth, and it is questionable how much longer they can profitably serve. The Jewish male as son and would-be lover has become a stock literary fixture—John Updike's parody of the type in *Bech* is a gentle hint that even the *goy* has the formula, so enough already. Where it once required an act of courage for a serious Jewish writer to risk parochialism by creating a distinctively Jewish character, the fact that Jewishness is now in literary fashion means that anyone can invoke it as a shorthand for signification, what Marcus Klein calls "a kind of strawberry mark, something that must mean something because it is celebrated in literature."

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The attenuated Jewishness that has begun showing up in literature has its obvious source in the culture at large. As American Jews exhibit fewer identifying characteristics, the novelist of manners finds it harder to establish that bit of ethnic specificity, of local color, that will distinguish his work. Echoes of Yiddish grow fainter as actual speakers of the language withdraw into old age or hasidic ghettos. It was once possible for a Jewish writer to write a "Jewish" book simply as a result of having lived in certain sections of Chicago or New York. One had inherited, as the novelist Norma Rosen has put it, a trust fund: "Without even trying, one had certain speech rhythms . . . , colloquialisms that were inherently funny, relationships always good for cutting down by wit." Nowadays, there is nothing much in the speech or appearance of the average Jew to distinguish him from any other American, and fewer of those cultural features which critics have grown accustomed to identifying as "Jewish."

The combined effect of literary saturation and a diluted Jewish culture has prompted some critics to prophesy the end of the Jewish movement in American writing. American Jewish literature, they say, derives its strength from the peculiar tension of the Jew who is native to two cultures while fully at home in neither; hence, the more fully the Jew becomes integrated into the larger culture, the less the tension and the fewer the creative energies generated by it. Jews, of course, will continue to write, but they will have lost the cutting edge of their hyphenated identity.

As if in partial confirmation of this view, some recent fiction by established American Jewish novelists would seem to offer striking examples of just such a movement of "assimilation," and to call into serious question the appropriateness of the ethnic label even for those who have worn it the longest. Saul Bellow has long objected to being enshrined (with Roth and Malamud) in a Jewish triumvirate; his most recent novel, *Humboldt's Gift*, with its un-Jewish narrator Charlie Citrine and its not-particularly-Jewish Humboldt (modeled after the American Jewish poet Delmore Schwartz), provides grounds for taking his protest to heart. An even more startling example of de-

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Judaization is Philip Roth's "true story" of Peter Tarnopol in *My Life as a Man*. In Tarnopol, who is a writer, Philip Roth has drawn the authentic American Jewish non-Jew, a character with remnants of a Jewish past, but no Jewish concerns. Unlike previous Roth protagonists, whose relation to Judaism is the familiar dialectical one of the challenger, Tarnopol, who spends the spring and summer of 1967 "considering what has become of his life," is merely oblivious. Now, no Jew in the spring and summer of 1967, unless lost among the Bushmen, or lost to the Jews, could have suffered a merely personal anguish, even one so exquisite and exclusive as Tarnopol's. That Tarnopol is intended to be Jewish we know from passing references and sociological hints—his first novel, *A Jewish Father*, has its setting in Germany!—but though he harps on his sense of isolation from an "increasingly chaotic America," toward the Jews he is completely indifferent.

THE ground that Tarnopol—and Roth—have vacated, however, may be the very territory that a new group of American Jewish writers is staking out for itself. In much the same way that the financial and social security achieved by the second immigrant generation has permitted its children, when so inclined, to turn back to their "roots," so the commercial and critical success of the second *literary* generation, which has affirmed the legitimate presence of Jews in American literature, now invites the Jewish writer to turn inward if he wishes. Having no longer to defend themselves from real or imagined charges of parochialism, the new Jewish writers of the 70's are freer to explore the "tribal" and particularistic aspects of Judaism, and even, turning the tables, to speculate on the restrictive limits of English as a literary language. Here the ethnic label fits more comfortably, for these are writers who self-consciously define themselves as Jews and attempt to express their artistic vision in Jewish terms. Their interest is not in the sociological or even the psychological legacy of a Jewish background, but in the national design and religious destiny of Judaism, in its workable myths. No longer content "to draw on the interest of what was put into the bank long ago by others" (to quote Norma Rosen again), they attempt to draw directly from Jewish sources and out of Jewish culture an image of an alternative civilization.

The self-styled spokesman and most audacious writer of this movement is Cynthia Ozick, who first presented her program at the America-Israel Dialogue of 1970, announcing that American Jewry was moving "Toward Yavneh," that is to say, toward the creation of an indigenously Jewish culture in the English language. Despite an almost complete lack of supportive evidence, Miss Ozick foretold the emergence of a new kind of literature as part of this general cultural renaissance: "A liturgical literature [which] has the configuration of the ram's horn: you give your strength to the inch-hole and the splendor spreads wide." The image of the *shofar*, or ram's horn, redolent of biblical history and the most awesome moments of the High Holy Days, was meant to discredit all those universalist Jews who had been blowing into the wrong end: George Steiner for glorifying the Exile as "an arena for humankind's finest perceptions"; Philip Roth for his protest, "I am not a Jewish writer; I am a writer who is a Jew"; Allen Ginsberg with his loud persuasion that religions are "allee samee." As against these, Miss Ozick argued that nothing produced by Jews in the Diaspora had lasted except that which was "centrally Jewish," particularistic and narrow in creative inception; and only that would survive which was written in a Jewish tongue. Her most highly charged—and correspondingly imprecise—remarks concerned the emergence in America of just such a new language, a Judeo-English, or "New Yiddish," the beginnings of which, she said, literate Jews were speaking and writing even now. The holy sparks struck in this new tongue would be the American Jewish literature of lasting merit.

The poetic sweep of these comments was more in the nature of visionary prophecy than of critical analysis, but the fiction produced by Cynthia Ozick in the intervening years provides more substantial evidence for her claims. Her most effective stories and novellas are not only steeped in internal Jewish life and lore to a degree that sets them apart from the work of her contemporaries and predecessors; they are actually Jewish assaults on fields of Gentile influence.

In the title story of her first collection, *The Pagan Rabbi*, a brilliant talmudist falls in love with the world of nature, and, feeling the agony of separation so acutely, he hangs himself to effect a pantheistic reunion. The notes and letter that he leaves behind offer eloquent testimony to the pagan ideal of freedom and passionately declare the pleasures of natural loveliness, but the story is on the side of his pious widow who damns them utterly with the biblical term, "abominations." Into the mouth of the errant rabbi the author has put part of her own aestheticist longing, raising worship of the beautiful to the highest philosophic and religious pitch, but only to oppose it finally, almost pitilessly, in the name of religious values.

The story, though written in English, bears significantly on Jewish literature in both Yiddish and Hebrew. One of the most pervasive subjects of the modern Yiddish and Hebrew literary tradition is the rediscovery of those natural human instincts which would free the dust-choked ghetto Jew from the stifling repressions of *halakhah* and religious inhibitions. In the works of Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, Bialik, Feierberg, and Tchernikhowsky, the physical world of sun, storm, trees, and rivers provides a model of freedom

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counterposed to the self-denial of *shtetl* culture. The pagan rabbi of Miss Ozick's story, shaped by that same talmudic culture but inhabiting the contemporary world, sees in nature not a necessary corrective but a competing force that commands an allegiance as fierce as God's. Her story unmasks the ideal of beauty and shows it to be, for the Jew, a force as destructive as any the "Gentile" world can offer.

Jewish vulnerability to Gentile standards is also the subject of a second story, "Envy; or, Yiddish in America," a masterpiece of contemporary fiction.* Through the frustrations of an aging Yiddish poet, the story details the humiliating effect of America and American values on a once-fertile culture. The English language, by bestowing fame on some (through translation), and oblivion on others, decrees who shall live and who shall die. The Yiddish writer, forever doomed to servitude amid plenty, is frozen in an attitude of envy toward those who, through the magic of translation, achieve success in an alien world. Although the story's detailed description of the Yiddish literary milieu is as authentic as gossip, its subject is the dead-serious one of a culture that must pay constant tribute to English hegemony or lose its children and all its future.

THE struggle against the assaults and seductions of the Gentile world continues to absorb Cynthia Ozick in her latest collection of fiction, *Bloodshed and Three Novellas*.† Three of the four novellas here are directly about that confrontation, and though free of the actual "bloodshed" promised by the book's title, do throb with ominous intensity.

The first story, "A Mercenary," introduces Lushinski, a Polish Jew by birth, now a citizen and the UN representative of a tiny African nation, and a permanent resident of New York. Lushinski's prodigious services and warm attachments to other cultures, African and American, are stimulated by the stark fear of his own Jewish identity, but his mistress, whom he calls a German countess, and his UN assistant, a true African by the name of Morris Ngambe, have little difficulty penetrating the ironic mask of the intellectual and exposing the vulnerable Jew, the potential victim, beneath. In the title story, "Bloodshed," a Jewish fund-raiser visits his distant relative in a newly established hasidic community outside New York. Suspicious of fraudulence in others, he is forced, during the course of an interview with the *rebbe*, to acknowledge his own deceit and his own demonic capacities. "An Education," the earliest and the least successful of the four novellas, is a heavily ironic treatment of a prize student who tries, and fails, to understand life by the same ideal systems of grammar and definition that can be used in Latin declension. In the last novella, "Usurpation," the protagonist-narrator is a Jewish writer identifiable with the author herself. With disturbing unreserve, the writer-narrator covets, appropriates, and then corrupts the work of others in her own need to make a perfect story and to win the "magic crown" of fame and immortality.

The unsettling effect of both action and style in this last story is deliberate. The novella blurs the normal lines of demarcation between fact and fiction: the narrator tells us that she attended a public reading by a famous author and heard him read a story that she felt to be "hers"; then gives us the plot of a recently published story by Bernard Malamud that the knowledgeable reader would recognize as *his*; then changes the ending of the Malamud story and proceeds to find the "real persons" on whom the story was presumably based, as well as the unpublished manuscripts of its main character. In questionable taste, Miss Ozick also incorporates into her novella another story, which she uses as a literary foil, an actual work that she had seen in manuscript (it was subsequently published in *Response* magazine) by a young writer with a less secure reputation than Malamud's. On this story too she builds her own, in a candid act of plagiarism.

The novella, which freely reworks and passes comment on the works of other writers, is intended to undermine the act of fiction as process and as product. To deflate the mystique of the artist, Miss Ozick presents "herself" as a selfish and somewhat nasty finagler. In place of the grand notions of creativity, she gives us the petty emotions and treacherous techniques, the false bottoms and promises that produce the illusion of fictional magic.

But this act, the "Usurpation" of "Other Peoples' Stories," to use the double title of the novella, is only the lower manifestation of a higher, more significant act of false appropriation to which Miss Ozick wishes to draw attention. The thoroughly Jewish concern of this work is the writing of fiction itself, in Miss Ozick's view an inheritance from the Gentiles and by nature an idolatrous activity. Art—in the Western tradition of truth to fiction as its own end—is against the Second Commandment, she says, and anti-Jewish in its very impulse. As a Jewish artist, Miss Ozick undertakes to subvert the aesthetic ideal by demonstrating its corrupting and arrogant presumption to truth. Thus, the Hebrew poet Saul Tchernikhowsky, one of those who worshipped at the shrine of pagan freedom and natural beauty, finds himself, at the end of the novella, caged in Paradise before a motto that teaches: "All that is not Law is levity." Like the pious widow who hardened her heart against the pagan rabbi, the Jewish artist must refuse and denounce the allure of art.

*First published in COMMENTARY, November 1969.
† Knopf, 178 pp., $6.95.

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It is not unusual in modern fiction for a story or novel to question its premises without giving them up. *Bloodshed*, however, commits an act of self-destruction. Like a prizefighter who cannot stop punching at the signal of the bell, Miss Ozick adds a preface to her four novellas to push her meaning home. It is she herself who "explains" her final story, reducing it like a tendentious reviewer to a moral function:

> "Usurpation" is a story written against story-writing; against the Muse-goddesses; against Apollo. It is against magic and mystification, against sham and "miracle," and, going deeper into the dark, against idolatry. It is an invention directed against inventing—the point being that the story-making faculty itself can be a corridor to the corruptions and abominations of idol-worship, of the adoration of magical event.

The preface tells us when the stories were written, why they have been included here, what they are about. This is not footnoting, like Eliot's notes to "The Waste Land" to which the author ingenuously compares it, but self-justification and special pleading.

The preface betrays the insecurities of both the artist and the Jew. Though she admires the transforming, magical kind of art, Miss Ozick is, in fact, an intellectual writer whose works are the fictional realization of ideas. Her reader is expected, at the conclusion of her stories, to have an insight, to understand the point of events rather than to respond to their affective power. Miss Ozick has publicly regretted this quality of hers, and accused herself of lacking what George Eliot calls "truth of feeling." It is true that, marvelously imaginative as she is with words and ideas, Miss Ozick is not on the whole successful at creating autonomous characters whose destiny will tantalize or move the reader.

Because she is a Jewish writer who prides herself on the "centrally Jewish" quality of her work, Miss Ozick has hit a curious snag here. The writer who can achieve "truth of feeling" produces universal art whatever the ethnic stuff of his subject, but a writer of ideas requires a community of knowledge and shared cultural assumptions. In her preface, Miss Ozick says she has to explain the meaning of "Usurpation" because a certain non-Jewish critic had failed to understand it. This failure she attributes not to the story's possible artistic shortcomings, but to its Jewish specificity, which puts it outside the critic's cultural range: "I had written 'Usurpation' in the language of a civilization that cannot understand its thesis." As the prophet of an indigenous Jewish culture in the English language, she might have been expected to hail the critic's failure to understand as a milestone—an authentic breakthrough in the creation of a distinctive Jewish literature. Instead, determined to have both the cake and the eating of it, she anxiously becomes her own translator, explaining Tchernikhowsky, Torah, the large ideas as well as the factual underpinnings of her work. If her kind of art is not inherently universal, she is apparently prepared to provide "art with an explanation" in order to spread the splendor wide.

Saving herself from a lonely ethnic fate, Miss Ozick appears in the preface not simply as an author but as cultural impresario of a new Jewish literature in America. Elsewhere, in book reviews, letters-to-the-editor, and public appearances like the America-Israel Dialogue of 1970, she has launched a veritable campaign to promote the idea of a Jewish literary community with meaningful ties to the past, to Israel, and to Jewish literature in Jewish languages. The thrust of this campaign is the Judaization of English, not only for the small community of Jews but for the wider world, so that Jewish writers may create their own literature and still hope to overcome the natural barriers of distinctiveness and particularism.

Aside from the difficulty of knowing, at this point in its development, just what, specifically, a "Jewish" literature in English would look like, one may ask why *any* Jewish writer with access to English should want to risk a parochial fate when even Miss Ozick, keeping an anxious eye on the reviewers, has shown herself to have second thoughts on the subject. Nor is her fortification of art by advertising a reassuring sign of confidence in her project. Still, the reach of Jewish literature in English in the direction she proposes, though modest, has been noticeable in recent years. Thus, Arthur A. Cohen's ambitious novel, *In the Days of Simon Stern*, offers a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Jewish motif of the messianic coming, and does so in what might be called a midrashic mode of writing, one in which a familiar story or theme is given a new reading. This kind of fiction has the difficult task of applying a pattern without mechanical strain, and of revitalizing the familiar without diminishing it. *The Rape of Tamar*, by Dan Jacobson, and *The Sacrifice*, a study of an Abraham figure by the Canadian Jewish novelist Adele Wiseman, are two very different works in the same mode.

The fiction of Hugh Nissenson, likewise occasionally written in this midrashic manner, concerns the most sensitive areas of Jewish life. In his earlier stories, collected in the volumes *A Pile of Stones* and *In the Reign of Peace*, Nissenson explored the ironic relation between "Diaspora" and "homeland," the distance between the Jew as innocent victim of history and the Jew as self-determining Israeli, prepared to shape history to his design. His stories were fine as exempla, though as fiction often guilty of "forcing the end," of imposing their moral design upon the characters in the same way that the extremists in Nissenson's stories violently force their impatient will upon the course of events.

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His just-published first novel, *My Own Ground*,* gets deeper into the stuff of morality. The book is written in the form of a memoir by one Jacob Brody, who at the alleged time of composition, 1965, is settled safely in Elmira, New York; in his memoir Jake goes back some fifty years to his adolescent struggle as an immigrant on the Lower East Side for something he could identify as "my own ground." Jake does not plunge into the heart of the action, but learns what he can from the sidelines, keeping eyes and ears wide open—there has seldom been so observant a character. He pieces together an education based on "street-savvy," the socio-political arguments of the day, and the religious persuasions of an earlier day, but all this is subject to the mythic structures that are the real determining forces of life.

Each of the major figures in this book—Schlifka the pimp, Miriam Tauber the landlady, Roman Osipovich Kagan the Marxist, and Hannah Isaacs, the girl whose fate determines the plot—is haunted and driven by a personal myth, a single remembered event or dream of his or her past. Before the coming to America was the brutalizing experience of Europe: the men were shaped by its distorted images of power; the women by distorted images of sex. The interacting forces represented by these four lives help to fashion the "myth," or determining story, of Jake, who becomes neither like the selfless hero Kagan nor like the sadistic exploiter Schlifka, but does his human duty as a man and stakes out a modest claim. Though paved not with gold, but with shards of brown glass, the streets of America are all the holy ground there is.

The main plot of the book, however, concerns Hannah, the only child of a fiercely pious rabbi who would never touch his daughter because she had irregular periods. Once, when her father knew she was menstruating and saw her watering some flowers in the garden, he shouted out the window, "Don't! Do you want to poison them? You'll kill them." Though no causal connection is drawn between her father's strictures and Hannah's perverse sexual inclinations, it is clear that her attraction to Schlifka the pimp, the masochistic pleasure she takes in his torture and abuse of her, have their roots in her father's sanctified rejection of her sexuality. At a moment when she might have been saved, she is once more denied by Kagan, the revolutionary, in the name of higher Marxist ideals, and since these three—the pimp, the holy Marxist, and the holy Jew represented by her father—are her only choices, she is led, seemingly inevitably, to suicide.

Jake's knowledge of the evil done to women, including a piercing memory of his mother's death in childbirth, is furthered by the landlady who is pursued by a haunting reminder of original female sin very similar to Hannah's. Although Jake participates only tangentially in the lives of these women, he feels guilty by implication, and tries to atone for the wrongs that others have committed against them. The heavy moral charge of the book consequently lacks proper focus; since Jake has to expiate sins he did not commit in a world he never made, his own final absolution, his finding of his own ground, is not really satisfactory, either from a narrative or from a moral point of view.

This fictional memoir is nevertheless more than a corrective for false nostalgia about the immigrant Jewish past. The book suggests the collective unconscious of American Jewry, the repressed trauma of its passage from the old world to the new. Yet Nissenson's version of this Jewish unconscious seems strangely beholden to the ideas of the Women's Lib movement, way beyond the point of mere distortion. In this sense *My Own Ground* serves as another necessary reminder that the "centrally Jewish" writer is still under the influence of an American culture which is much more powerful than his own.

TO DISTINGUISH between a kind of American Jewish writing that may be on its way out, and one that may be on its way in, is not to make any statement of relative value, but simply to point out the difference between writers who have all along insisted they belong to the Anglo-American tradition, though their heritage be Jewish, and writers who self-consciously place themselves within a Jewish cultural sphere, though their language is English. Perhaps a modest example can illustrate the point.

Cynthia Ozick's title story, "Bloodshed," bears a remarkable resemblance to Philip Roth's "Eli, the Fanatic," the most "Jewish" story in his 1959 collection, *Goodbye, Columbus*. In both of these fictional confrontations between a secularized American Jew and an old-country believer, the moral scales are tipped in favor of the latter, not merely for his wry intelligence and personal courage, but also for his having survived the Holocaust. In both works the protagonist capitulates to this superior moral force, admits the relative hollowness of his own comfortable existence, and recognizes, even if he cannot accept, the elevated spiritual situation of the other.

The differences between Roth and Ozick start in their choice of locale. Roth's Eli Peck is a young lawyer in Woodenton, an American suburb where Jews are resolutely, though not yet comfortably, indistinguishable from their Gentile neighbors; into this suburb Rabbi Tsuref comes as a stranger to remind its Jews of something valuable they have lost. Cynthia Ozick's Bleilip, on the other hand, also a lawyer, takes a Greyhound bus out of New York to reach his destination, a small, self-contained hasidic community where *he*

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 182 pp., $7.95.

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is the only stranger. Through this artificial device (there is no practical reason for Bleilip to have made the trip), Miss Ozick transports her character into a traditional Jewish environment which then authorizes, and, in fact, demands ongoing references to an internal Jewish world in which the Americanized Bleilip is at a cultural disadvantage. As against Roth's use of the shorthand symbol of a secure religious tradition to expose the social and psychological insecurity of a modern Jewish community, Miss Ozick portrays a real-life situation in which issues of faith and doubt, foreign to the skeptical Bleilip, are taken seriously and are seen to have consequences.

PARADOXICALLY, however, it is Philip Roth and not Cynthia Ozick, or Hugh Nissenson, who can best afford to write about the American Jewish reality. For American Jews today in their numbers live not on Nissenson's Lower East Side or in Ozick's hasidic *shtetl*, but in "Woodenton," the home of Eli Peck. With no desire (to put it mildly) to do "public relations" for Judaism or the Jews, Philip Roth has been free to draw from his observation and experience whatever they may yield. For those, by contrast, who take Judaism seriously as a cultural alternative, and wish to weave new brilliant cloth from its ancient threads, the sociological reality of the present-day American Jewish community would seem to present an almost insurmountable obstacle. Writers like Ozick and Nissenson, who feel the historic, moral, and religious weight of Judaism, and want to represent it in literature, have had to ship their characters out of town by Greyhound or magic carpet, to an unlikely *shtetl*, to Israel (the scene of many of Nissenson's stories in his previous collections), to other times and other climes, in search of pan-Jewish fictional atmospheres. In the meantime the actual world of American Jews has lent itself to the production of satire, but not so far to any nobler art.

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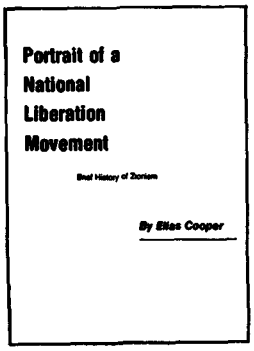

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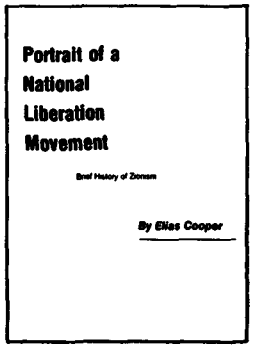

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Fear

A Story

Saral Teilhet-Waldorf

DR. WANAGANDA first saw Mrs. Anders at the Lake Victoria Hotel. He remembered the incident well because of the English boy who was leaning on the second-story balustrade peering intently through a large pair of binoculars.

The boy was still, like an animal that had spotted its prey, and Dr. Wanaganda knew some apprehension. The radio said an invasion from Tanzania was at any moment imminent, and as the hotel was near Uganda's only airport, he feared the boy had sighted airplanes.

He excused himself from friends at the bar and went outside onto the balcony. He scanned the sky. From far off came the sound of a prop plane, painted in a camouflaged jungle brown and green that against the blueness of the African sky could not have been more conspicuous.

"Is it one of ours?" he asked the boy.

The boy appeared to jump. He drew himself in from the railing and came to attention. "Sir?" he piped in that particular pre-adolescent voice of English schoolchildren.

"I am sorry to have disturbed you. Are you looking at the airplane? Can you identify it?"

The boy glanced up. "Do you mean *that* airplane? It is one of Amin's. My father says it flies over the lake every day looking for spies."

"I see," Dr. Wanaganda smiled. "Those are very nice binoculars. What are you looking at?"

The boy did not reply at first. Then: "I was looking at my mother," and with polite insolence, but great insolence nevertheless, he asked of the African doctor, "Would you like a look? She's the one in the tiger bikini." He held out the binoculars.

"I think not," said Dr. Wanaganda softly. He and the boy looked at each other steadily. The doctor took out a small black notebook, detached its small gold pencil. "What is your name?" he asked.

The boy now looked curious. "Why?"

"I am a doctor. Perhaps someday I will be in a position to cure you of your insolence. I will write down your name here in this book as a potential patient."

"Are you a spy? Is that why you wear dark glasses? Are you going to chop me up in small little pieces and throw me into the Nile?" The boy slung the binoculars around his neck. "My name is Colin Nagel." He walked away.

Dr. Wanaganda put away his notebook; he had started it as a joke, a painful joke, many years ago when he was in training in England and France. It contained a list of his enemies, the dates of their transgressions against him, the punishment he thought appropriate. At times he was ashamed of his actions, at times too angry to care. But now the notebook served a more useful purpose; it no longer was restricted to *wazungu* but included his own people, too, those who were afraid of him, for it was those who were afraid of him who were the true enemies. The notebook therefore was dangerous; he had been stupid to have shown off like that before the boy. And the boy had not been afraid! However much hate there was in his heart, he could not help but admire the boy's fearlessness.

He didn't look then but waited long after the boy was gone and then returned, a beer in hand. and scanned the pool area. There were few *wazungu* left at the hotel, mostly airline crews, pilots and stewardesses. He liked the British Arcadians best in their Scottish plaid pleats, who rested overnight at the hotel between the extra flights put on to get the Indians out. His *wazungu* friends had left, many without saying goodbye. There were still the United Nations personnel, and, of course, the British, who believed colonialism was good for both black and white. But as the Nile brought down the dead bodies, he and his friends did not know what to think. Why couldn't Africans rule themselves without so much killing? Why do we kill our own kind?

The pool was empty of any tiger-bikinied lady. He watched instead a woman serving tea and cakes to three little girls sitting at one of the poolside tables. They said she was a Jewess, her maiden name Levy on her passport; tribal affiliations were carefully noted by the government. She did not have any of the facial characteristics associated with her race, but nowadays one could have plastic surgery to remedy anything—noses, breasts, stomachs—anything but color of course, though there were pills that left one spotted or streaked

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like genetically-queered albinos. A colleague's wife, after Amin forbade Uganda women to wear wigs, asked him if hair transplants were possible for long hair. He told her that in America women cut their hair and frizzed it to look like Africans, to look like her; she went away astounded.

He shifted to the waiter, a Congolese, standing nearby. The woman looked up, said something to him, but the waiter didn't move. The woman frowned, put down the teapot, and searched for her purse. She found it under the table, opened it, and took out some money. The waiter moved in closer. The woman put the money on the tray. She smiled, said something more, but the waiter just moved away. The woman stared after him. She was wearing some sundress of shiny material and white sandals and her arms and neck were red from the sun. Her legs were that chicken-white Africans associate with dead bodies; for a Jewess, she was very white.

The three little girls were not sitting in harmony. One was kneeling on the chair and spooning much sugar into her cup. The other two appeared to be fighting over a cake. All three had identical bathing costumes on; they looked like little ballerinas, ruffles around their hips, their blonde hair back in braids. Unlike their mother, they were very tan. Suddenly the Jewess looked up and saw him on the balcony and through his binoculars he could see her face very clearly: the mouth slightly open, perspiration near the nose, the eyes behind the sunglasses, startled, scared. He was sorry to have frightened her. Normally he did not like to frighten women and children. He jerked his binoculars up into the sky as if he had, all along, been watching the flight of an eagle.

DR. WANAGANDA did not see the Jewess again until she was ushered into his office at the A-1 clinic on a Monday several months later. He was much surprised by the change. She wore a long skirt of Jinja material, cheaply made, and rubber shower sandals which could be bought at any local market. Her top piece was a strange looking white blouse with long puffed sleeves and a drawstring neck. Hanging over the blouse was a rough piece of rope with what looked like an envelope wrapped around it, this worn like chain and pendant. Her blonde hair, showing dark at the roots (the hairdresser at the hotel had disappeared, he understood), was partially covered with a kerchief and she now was very tanned, very brown-skinned, and he saw that she was much older than he first supposed.

He looked at her chart. Mrs. Anders. Thirty-six. Monday last at the clinic. And the Monday before. Every Monday since the borders had closed. The patient complained of heat palpitation, nausea, eye irritation. She took Cloroquin, 250 mg weekly; sulfa and lomotil for diarrhea; had had tetanus, yellow fever, cholera, diphtheria, TB shots, all updated. Dr. Mahindra, the Indian doctor and former colleague at the clinic until last week, prescribed ointment for the eye and to return on Monday if not better. Nothing else was noted. All those visits but nothing else noted except a prescription for ointment and a return visit. He sized up the situation.

"You mustn't be so afraid," Dr. Wanaganda said. "Uganda was not always like this."

Mrs. Anders sat passively in the chair, hands in lap. But she had already taken in that Dr. Wanaganda was thin, and slight of build, a Baganda; one learned to detect tribal differentiation quickly. Mrs. Bateson said it was essential for knowing who your friends were. The doctor wore an English-cut suit, very tailored. He spoke softly. They all spoke softly, the babababs and mamamas buzzing like bees in the hot, liquid air, then silence. She passed by, her eyes fixed ahead so as not to comment even kinetically upon the knot of soldiers there on the veranda of the nearly deserted Forest Ministry building, or there by the bank. Sometimes they stopped her, asked for her papers, her identity card; they spoke their English loudly as if she might not understand. They made her take off her sunglasses to see the color of her eyes; they kept theirs on. They were impatient, in a hurry; they slapped her papers together, told her to move on. But when she looked back later, pretending to be checking the back tire of her bicycle, they had relaxed again, were sitting on the steps, laughing softly with their friends.

The African women in their rustling *busuki* dresses and matching colored scarves spoke softly, too; she sat among them on the narrow bench that ran along the dark corridor of the A-1 clinic and waited her turn. She had a bottle in her purse, a washed-out Coca-Cola bottle. Last time she had been told she must bring her own bottle for the medicine, but the medicine was a salve and they gave it to her in a little round pill box. But she kept bringing her bottle just in case for, as the receptionist had told her sternly, there was a bottle shortage, and a paper shortage, and the freshly killed meat she bought at the butcher's was wrapped in paper torn from school exercise books of students long ago.

But she liked Entebbe, Uganda, Africa. She liked it for all the wrong reasons—the whitewashed bungalows with red tile roofs that reminded her of California, her childhood land of Spanish missions and Spanish oak trees, though, in dispassionate moments, she saw quite clearly that her bungalow and all the others, built by the British nearly a century ago, were not white at all, but painted a damp yellow.

She liked it—the bungalows, the lake that stretched forever, the immense trees hiding the sun, the monkeys, the eagles drifting and shifting in the lake breeze, the fruit bats that seemed to stay awake all day in the large trees by the school emitting strange sound patterns.

But she was afraid.

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Her husband met her at the airport crying, "You shouldn't have come! Things are terrible here!" and he blamed her, she was sure of that, blamed her for holidaying on the way over, stopping off in London and Rome. The girls were so eager to tell him about everything, but he ordered them out of the hotel room, then locked the door and told her in a low voice that Amin was saying terrible things about the Jews and that an American embassy man had told him there was nothing to fear unless one was a Jew.

"You can hardly call me a Jew!" said Mrs. Anders. The scene was so melodramatic she wanted to laugh. "Just because your name was once Scandinavian or something doesn't make you Scandinavian!"

"Your father's Jewish!"

"He's an American! His parents may have been Jewish, but my father is as American as apple pie and the Fourth of July We were brought up in northern California where nobody made a fuss over things like that. Levy's just a genealogical inheritance, not a cultural one!"

"But *they* don't make these subtle distinctions here! The Res Rep asked me if you were a practicing Jew, and would you keep your voice down?" He seemed like a stranger to her.

"You've become paranoid!" she exclaimed. "I have been in these clothes since yesterday afternoon it seems. Can I take a shower? You must go to the children. They are no doubt frightened to death. I have been warning them about snakes and they probably think you are telling me you found one in your bed last night."

"You must listen. This is desperately important. You must write your parents and tell them not to send you letters here in care of the hotel; all our mail is going by pouch now. You have two letters here from them and they both have been opened. To the people in charge here Levys are Zionist spies, do you understand?"

She didn't understand. We are amused, said the Queen! She had attended Miss Harker's School for Ladies run by an Englishwoman who had become her model for behavior, and when people asked her if all Californians talked and acted like her, she said, "Only Miss Harker girls." She had ranked in the Junior tennis championship for the state, been a runner-up Homecoming Queen at Stanford ("Always the bridesmaid, never the bride," she had told her father when he tried to congratulate her, but they had both been pleased), but, like her mentor, she had a strong sense of duty, a social conscience, and where some gave only lip service, she gave time, commitment. And to have all this reduced to some misapplied ethnic label! Not that her father had been ashamed of being Jewish; on the contrary, she told her husband, he had considered changing the family name to Lewis for business reasons, but after the war he said he was too proud of being a Jew to do a thing like that. And if her father discouraged his children from reading any of the concentration-camp literature, it was not because he wished to pretend it hadn't happened, but because he felt that what had happened was so inhumane, so totally inhumane, that knowledge of it would make one insensitive to the lesser evils. Her husband kept telling her to lower her voice; such was the nature of lesser evils.

One day her husband informed her that they were to be reassigned to either Liberia or Thailand. It would take time, of course, they couldn't just go rushing off on the first airplane, for Uganda was a member nation and one did not offend member nations, however blighted their national policies. But they would be leaving, and Mr. Anders went whistling off down the path to buy himself a beer at the hotel. Mrs. Anders watched him go, her lips "sealed," just like the heroines in lurid Gothic novels whose faces become crypts of unspeakable desires. But no dust or ashes were within her, said Mrs. Anders to herself; I seal my lips for now to contain the unspeakable, but no one is pushing me out of Uganda without a fight. Let my cowardly husband take the children out to safety, but I shall stay and fight, and Mrs. Anders's mind became clouded with historical images—Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, even Madame Curie who somehow represented steadfastness in the face of danger.

In time she learned to be afraid.

She suspected her husband told others she was Jewish. They all seemed so excruciatingly nice to her. She saw her husband as the helpful boy in class who raised his hand and said, "Teacher, teacher, I cannot tell a lie, she did it, she did it, it wasn't me!" She grew to hate him, and when he complained of chest pains, or his stomach was upset again and she could hear the dreadful deliverance in the bathroom, she thought with some satisfaction that God was punishing him, her mind now so primitive with fear she prayed to a vengeful God. Once she started a letter home telling her father she thought she was going crazy, but she tore it up; she wasn't that crazy. But after awhile she couldn't understand why she had been so angry with her husband and waited pathetically for him to come home from the Ministry of Works down the road where he and a German engineer used to play chess most of the day. The house never seemed safe without him in it, the children never safe without his protection.

In the sunlight she felt able to cope. But inside, inside all those cool dark rooms of her house or the clinic or even Grindlay's Bank, she felt not herself at all, but trapped, every part of her on the alert, every smell recorded, every sound noted. Most of all she feared the night that came with a suddenness for which she was never prepared; at one minute to seven it was light, bright light, no dusk, no mellowed evening, but light, and at one

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minute after seven it was night, not dark, but black outside except for the small light bulb over the garage and the spotlights from the roof that made small pools of light on the gravel of the garden path, or on her violets growing near the window.

She would lie on the broad double bed that defied her American fitted sheets and look out at the black night through the row of cottagelike windows that lined the bedroom wall. She felt her heart independent of her, striving to mount the rib cage, its pulsating mass sliding here, then there.

It was so quiet except for her heart, as she listened with all her attention for something, the snake slithering over the tiles of the roof to find a hole in, the *kondos*—thieves, the soldiers stealthily creeping through the bushes to force open the kitchen door, the most vulnerable door of the bungalow. Then they would force open the dining-room door, also locked, and then after killing Warden, the Alsatian dog that guarded their living room, they would force open the doors to the bedrooms, kill her children, and then drag her away. There was no way to escape, no way except through the doors, for all the windows had bars.

She could not call the servants; she feared them, too. Why would they save her anyway?

She had three, a male cook from the Congo, a Shamba boy from Toro, and a housegirl from Kenya. They listened to her instructions, but she never knew what they were going to do. She gave them money for shopping; it was never enough. The clothes never dried. The ticks had not been removed from the walls. The screens were not yet fixed. But she was afraid to complain. They all had radios that they listened to as they did the chores. Sometimes the English program came on and she had to listen:

> The chief magistrate of Kampala, Mr. Emmanuel Mbazira, left the magistrates' court last Tuesday and disappeared, court sources say. They said he has not been seen since.
>
> Similar doubts surround the fate of Mr. Henry Berunga, regional director of the East African Railway Corporation, who is reported to have disappeared on January 18.
>
> It was learned that a Kampala businessman, Mr. Mathias Kigundu, was abducted by unidentified men two days ago. Later reports said his body had been discovered at Lugazi, thirty miles east of Kampala.
>
> Last week the body of a Roman Catholic priest, Father Clement Kiggundu, was found in the burned-out wreck of his car in a forest reserve ten miles from Kampala. A pathologist's report said the Father had been strangled and then shot before his car was set on fire.
>
> An Asian girl, Margis Sangi, thirteen, is reported missing from her Kampala home. She was last seen walking home from the American School.

Nothing yet about her, the last Jew in Africa, but they were stealing children! Her children liked the servants. They spent a great deal of time out back in the servants' compound. She did not wish to scare the children or offend the servants and so she did nothing but watch from the window, listening to make sure she heard their voices. If it grew too quiet, she called out, "Tina! Mia! Andrea! Come in for your hats!" or for pills, or for drinks, or for a treat.

One day Mrs. Bateson came to call and Alice brought tea without being told. Mrs. Bateson asked about Alice and the others, as she had "trained" them, she said. Most of the servants in Entebbe had once been in her employ, and if Mrs. Anders had any trouble she was to tell Mrs. Bateson. Mrs. Bateson was very tiny, with wrinkled skin like a lizard, and her eyes darted everywhere. Mrs. Anders felt the servants become silent in her presence.

Mrs. Bateson spoke in rapid Swahili to Alice. The tea tray was removed and when it appeared again, it had a white napkin spread on it and the tea was hot.

"You must keep after them," said Mrs. Bateson.

Mrs. Anders confessed certain fears, stopping though at the dark waters of her ethnicity. If only she could talk to someone about the silliness of it all! Think about your children, he shouted over and over. Think about your children!

"I will bring you something for your fear," said Mrs. Bateson. "Some African medicine is good, and I am a friend of a witch doctor down at the fishing village. He gives me very good medicine. Everyone is afraid of me because I talk with this witch doctor and take his medicine. You take this pill and everyone will be afraid of you."

Mrs. Anders did not know what to make of the pellets Mrs. Bateson sent over the next day by her maid. They were in an envelope that had been folded and taped over a crude piece of string. A note said the pills should be worn next to the skin. The servants should be made aware of her pills.

Mrs. Anders didn't dare wear the string when her husband was home. But each time she had to go into Entebbe on her bicycle she wore the medicine. And today, her Monday day, she wore it to the clinic for she knew the Indian doctor was gone, only the African doctors were left, and they would listen to her because she, too, had magic.

Dr. Wanaganda waited and then repeated his observation.

"You must not be so afraid. And you must not wear shoes like that. It is all right for Africans but not for whites. You might get chiggers. They are not pleasant to get. You can buy shoes at Bata. They are a Canadian firm that sells shoes all over the world. They have fitted many feet. I do not want you to get chiggers."

"My eye is better," said Mrs. Anders. She would not let him frighten her. She waited for him to check her, take her blood pressure, listen to her

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heart, look down her throat, examine her eyes, ears, nose, tap her knee, look at her palms, test her nails. It was imperative that he do so, that he tell her all was well, that the fear had not poisoned her body. Dr. Mahindra had been delicate, discreet; they did not talk about their fears, but about her body, how well it was, where an ear infection might lead, what it might be symptomatic of, British medicine compared to American medicine, biogenetics, theories of the universe.

"I am glad," said Dr. Wanaganda. "I will make a note of that. Have you any other complaints? I see you have been seeing Dr. Mahindra every Monday. Are you better now?"

"Yes, I am better. We are liking Africa very much. It is very pretty." She did not want a social chat. Why did he not just do his job? Why did he persecute her like this?

"Shall I examine you now?" Dr. Wanaganda took his stethoscope out of the desk drawer. He had no nurse to assist him and did not like to examine patients except when they were fully dressed. If they appeared really ill, they were put into one of the sick rooms where he examined them properly.

He brought his chair over, sat down, pushed aside Mrs. Anders's string and envelope, and listened to her heart. He took her pulse, asked her to open her mouth, held her palms in his, checking for skin discolorations.

"You are fortunate to be so healthy," he said. He tried a little joke. "You must take vitamins every day. All Americans take vitamins every day. A pill a day keeps the doctor away."

Mrs. Anders's face became infused with heat. She did indeed take two of her children's vitamin pills every day; did he think she was depriving her children? She had to stay well, though.

"What is this?" Dr. Wanaganda touched lightly the string and envelope around her neck. He was really quite shocked by Mrs. Anders's appearance; Americans, for some reason, didn't hold up well in Africa.

Mrs. Anders said nothing.

"Is it some memento you carry around? A letter?"

Mrs. Anders tore the string from her neck. the gesture so angry and yes, unwarranted, that Dr. Wanaganda saw in her that same insolence of the English schoolboy.

"It's no good anyway!" she cried flinging the envelope on the desk. "It's some silly kind of African medicine!"

"I see." And Dr. Wanaganda did see, did understand. He returned to his desk, opened his drawer again and replaced his stethoscope, took out a letter opener, and slit open the envelope. He turned it upside down and several pellets fell on his blotter. He did not touch them but leaned over and smelled them, then carefully, using the envelope as a sweeper, swept them off his desk into the wastebasket.

"It is cow dung, dried blood, spittle, maybe other ingredients. You must not take it. It is dirty. It is not good for our own people to take it. It will not make you strong. It will not make you fearless. It will not protect you from evil spirits. You are a white woman. I should not have to tell you this."

"I wasn't going to take it," said Mrs. Anders. "I'm not that crazy!" Yet she knew she was that crazy and she wanted to rush right then to the wastebasket, get out the pellets and swallow them all down in Dr. Wanaganda's presence, show him she didn't care. she wasn't afraid of him or anyone else!

"Who gave them to you?"

"I cannot say."

"You must get rid of whoever gave you this. That person will bring you harm." Dr. Wanaganda felt alarm, not so much for Mrs. Anders but for her three little girls. One of the servants must be terrorizing Mrs. Anders. It had happened before. "I will give you a pill to make you feel better. You do not have to take it now, but you can carry it around with you at all times. Then when you feel very frightened, you may take it."

The room was bare except for the desk, his chair, her chair, and a cupboard between two of the long windows that overlooked the clinic's veranda. It was to this cupboard, where his personal, private supplies were kept, that he went with his key, and from the meager collection he had been able to assemble, he took out a few tranquilizers.

Mrs. Anders took the pills unwillingly. Did he think her a fool? She didn't take unmarked white pills. She had millions of tranquilizers with her in the bungalow anyway, but in dangerous situations one didn't dope onself up; one had to stay awake, keep alert.

"I'm a Jew," said Mrs. Anders. She put the pills in her purse. "My father was Jewish but not my mother, so I am only half-Jewish. My husband isn't Jewish, so my children are only a quarter-Jewish. Do you think anyone would really hurt my children because they are a quarter-Jewish?"

She waited for Dr. Wanaganda to get up and arrest her.

"In Africa, tribalism is dead," the doctor said instead. "It is a myth perpetuated by Western bourgeois society, I fear. What is going on in Uganda is a class war, not a tribal war, but Amin is a very bad person who uses tribalism to deceive people as to the true causes. In the new society such things will be unnecessary. There will be no need for tribal names. We will all be comrades. No one will be afraid."

SOMETHING serious had passed between them; they both understood that, he in his chair swiveled around so he faced a window, and she facing him, clutching her purse, her madness gone, the madness of her act just hitting her. How could she have endangered her children's lives like that! Her husband begged her to keep

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her mouth shut, not to speak out forthrightly. "Don't give me that Miss Harker crap!" he cried, "this isn't America!" How could she have known he would respond to her secret with his own secret? She did not want to know Dr. Wanaganda was a Marxist. Didn't he know the first rule was not to volunteer information? Marxists were dangerous. Amin hated Marxists as much as he hated Zionists—they were going to overthrow his government, assassinate him. What did she know about Marxism, Zionism, capitalism? Words, words, words in textbooks, newspapers, words to scare people. Her father did not like Karl Marx. Her father had a peculiar way of reading the newspaper, folding it sideways, vertically sideways until only the article he wished to read remained uncreased. This came from his commuter days, he said, when one did not have elbow space. He was reading the newspaper once and he shook his head, "God save the Jews from Marx!" he said to no one in particular. His two daughters reading the Sunday comics did not respond, and his wife grilling the bacon in the kitchen did not respond, but the African doctor was waiting for her response, her acknowledgment that he spoke well, ill, true, false. She must be terribly careful. Terribly crafty. Yet was she always to deny her father? Think of the children! She must seal her lips.

Dr. Wanaganda could see he had frightened Mrs. Anders even more by his speech. Stupid woman! In a new society people like her would at least have the same chance as everyone else. Never more, never less.

"You must not be so afraid!" he said.

Afraid! Why did he keep harping on her fear? It was wrong to frighten people! Wrong to make them afraid! She wasn't afraid of him!

"Dr. Mahindra says this room is bugged," she cried, "but I am not afraid! I'm a Jew! Long live tribalism!"

"Please do not shout." said Dr. Wanaganda. "You are distraught. You must go home and take the pill I gave you." Martyrs! They all want to be martyrs!

"God save the Queen!" Mrs. Anders cried. "I'm not afraid."

If this was craziness, she thought jubilantly, what a relief! She didn't feel afraid, she felt wonderful! Wonderful! Even when Dr. Wanaganda slapped her face, she felt wonderful! Wonderful! They gave her a shot, they called her husband. They took her home.

"I feel wonderful!" And indeed her face was rosy, her eyes shining until she went out like a light, fell dead asleep with that exclamation.

Such insolence.

Dr. Wanaganda told Mr. Anders to let his wife sleep.

"She does not have strong nerves," he said. He then returned to the clinic. "Quickly," he told the driver. "*Upesi!*" he shouted. He must search that office to see if it were bugged! But already his stomach was heavy with fear.

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Democracy According to Whitman

Alfred Kazin

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person.
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

ALTHOUGH Walt Whitman was a journalist before he was a poet, and with the publication of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 began defending, prefacing, explaining his poetry in highly oratorical prose pieces, one can argue that prose was not altogether natural to him.

"To the ostent of the senses and eyes, I know," he says early in *Democratic Vistas*, "the influences which stamp the world's history are wars, uprisings or downfalls of dynasties, changeful movements of trade, important inventions, navigation, military or civil governments, advent of powerful personalities, conquerors, etc." *Ostent* is typical Whitman, strongly suggestive if too archaic and even legendary to seem immediately right to our current notion that prose must be nothing but an instrument, "perfectly clear." Whitman is shoveling at the reader a lot of history in that sentence, and as usual he prefers to catalogue rather than to analyze and explain. All history, nothing less! And like the procession into Noah's Ark, a movement by couples. History, even in that one innocently pretentious sentence, is rhythmic and sexual. No solitaries here—except the neglected solitary poet who will soon be striking it up for poetry, America, democracy, the limitless future.

Whitman's prose—especially when he is celebrating his own poetry and the "mission" of his poetry—is never really separate from his poetry. It *is* his poetry, in a slightly lower voice. If poetry, as Greek rhetoricians realized very early, somehow represents the aspiration of the human mind to condensation, to contraction under the highest inner pressure, prose to certain poets will always *seem* (not necessarily be) casual, second-best, too obviously directed to other people in their less passionate undertakings. It will even seem a diversion from the sometimes unbearable excitement and strain of making a poem that, as Yeats said, must click shut like a box.

Despite his famous looseness of form, the essential gift of unlimited free association with the undersurface of human fantasy and desire that was Whitman's strategy—it was his way of summoning up for himself the ancient name and profession of poetry—Whitman knew that if a poem doesn't "work," it doesn't exist. Whitman knew as well as Poe—who was afraid that a long poem must dispel a poem's necessary close intensity—that a poem must become the reader's experience of some pressing unity. Whitman's poems are more like sonatas than they are like boxes, are dream journeys more than they are "perfectly integrated" arguments in lyric form. Whitman's best poems are serial, suggest an unending movement round and round a self-evident center that is always in sight and becomes a "control" over experience, meditative, orphic, religious. When this "control" does not persuade us of its felt sublimity, the poem dissipates into the triviality of merely assertive personal efforts. Whitman kept trying all the time, "experimenting" with every possible item of free association by adding them all up. But when Whitman feels everything he is trying to say about his special relation to "divinity"—God dwells in us as perfect auto-suggestion!—he suddenly flashes out into the natural mystic, the poet of unlimited fraternity with human experience, that in his prose defenses and explanations of "L of G" (his impatient shorthand for *Leaves of Grass*) he was always claiming to be.

The most influential and lasting criticism in English has been written by poets—Sidney, Johnson, Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Eliot—whose need to defend and explain their own poetry took wing as a new theory of poetry, hints for the imagination to slough off its old habits. Whitman tries to do the latter, but is not interested enough in poetry other than his own to make a non-sympathetic reader change his mind about Whitman's poetry itself. He is not a theorist of *art*. Whitman's prose defenses of his poetry—from the preface to *Leaves of Grass* through *Democratic Vistas* to "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads"—have a

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fervor of self-definition that astonishes and grips the reader by its passionate outcry for recognition. But although they are idiosyncratic, self-willed, self-propelling, like Whitman's poetry, they are not "criticism" of the kind that the great English poets have given us in the essays, lectures, letters that are their shop talk. Whitman's abstractions are too self-concerned, his knowledge of *ars poetica* too threadbare, to give us a valuable critical theory of poetry. He read poetry—even Homer in a *prose* translation—as "national" or epic poetry, as suggestion rather than instruction to his own amazingly self-generated ambition. He seems to have been very little influenced by the *poetry* of other poets.

Nevertheless, Whitman is as original a prose writer as he is a poet. *Democratic Vistas*, together with his great personal diary of the Civil War, *Specimen Days*, make up an extraordinary self-portrait of the American poet in the 19th century, beleaguered by every possible threat to his existence as an artist, yet turning himself into the voice of his country's inner aspirations.

MANY Americans, many American writers, have seen themselves as personifications of America. This is an American habit, almost an American gift, made possible by the ability—in the absence of antiquity, the Middle Ages, the requisite kings and saints—to think of America as a virtuous abstraction. "France was a land, England was a people, but America, having about it still that quality of the idea, was harder to utter," wrote Scott Fitzgerald as late as *The Crack-Up*. (He went on to prove just how hard it was to "utter" by adding: "It was the graves at Shiloh and the tired, drawn, nervous faces of its great men, and the country boys dying in the Argonne for a phrase that was empty before their bodies withered. It was a willingness of the heart.")

Whitman's personification of America is deeper than the successive myths by writers of America as an explorer, an Enlightenment philosopher on his hill, a frontiersman, a prankish schoolboy, an innocent abroad, a Rough Rider, a desperate expatriate. Whitman convinces the reader that democracy in America (the subject of Tocqueville's great book) made Whitman himself possible, that democracy in the most unlimited sense is what made Walt Whitman *necessary*, that democracy makes the new human dimension by which the reader understands him.

"Democracy *ma femme*," democracy in the most unlimited sense, democracy as ideal equality through unexpected freedom, democracy as the purest aspiration for the "evolution" of the individual *in* the mass—here comes everybody! And at long last! This grave, great hope for a democracy just as despised in the classical republic as it was elsewhere—this was Whitman's way of joining himself to his country. Democracy alone had made possible his self-discovery as a poet, democracy was a way of recognizing his subject matter in himself. Democracy was the masses out of whom Walt Whitman came. Democracy was openness to oneself, to others, to the God within oneself whom he deciphered as past and present, as the universal experience that we carry in our hearts. Above all, democracy was the promise of the future, of *a* future for the human race so long restricted by what Whitman liked to call "feudalism"—medieval privilege and inequality that he came to identify with European class society and class thinking at all times. "Feudalism" had persisted into the modern era, and so it is the *ancien régime* that *Democratic Vistas* will help to supplant. "Feudalism" was Europe, the past, a deadly contempt for ordinary human beings. Even the poetry of "feudalism," in his easy roll call of the great poets of the past, Whitman honored only because he could put himself into the great line. His own ambition, never so clear as in *Democratic Vistas*, was to write the epic of the new, the modern, of America. "Feudal" poetry, whether in the Middle Ages or in 19th-century romantic imitations, had impoverished itself artistically by ignoring the mass, the average, the secret selves under the surface.

So it was "democracy" all over again, Whitman's favorite because all-inclusive theme, that became the magnificent human claim of *Democratic Vistas*. It was a last desperate avowal that the future rested with democracy that Whitman was basing himself on. Democracy had been the making of him, had raised him from the ordinary Brooklyn crowd. Democracy would even in the Gilded Age (a crisis of corruption and materialism shockingly the aftermath of what had been a holy war for the Union and the freedom of the common man) make possible the long-delayed recognition of Whitman's greatness as the first great *modern* poet. He was presenting "L of G" as his "visiting card to the coming generations in the New World."

Only democracy, in Whitman's America of the future, would redeem his worldly failure and relieve the critical (but of course temporary) materialism and corruption of the Gilded Age. The argument of *Democratic Vistas* was an effort to *create* Whitman's reputation (sixteen years after he had first put *Leaves of Grass* to press) on the basis that "America" and "democracy" were the same terms, that the country and its "limitless future" were unrecognized epic material.

America as epic: America could now take its place among the great subjects of literature. Why had this not been recognized before? Because only a great epic poet could do justice to his country and its destiny. Democracy had not sufficiently proclaimed itself—had not adequately understood its spiritual "import"—until its great poet came along. The crisis of democracy, Whitman noted in the 1870's, was being exaggerated and even misrepre-

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sented by *writers* who were not up to its artistic possibilities. These writers were all secular and shallow, without the requisite historic sense of what humanity had come through to achieve *this* much freedom and fraternity. Democracy was the oldest, the most persistent of human dreams. It had not found its full "voice" until the epic poet of the "modern" had arrived. An epic, as Pound was to say, "is a poem including history." Whitman's great point now was that the epic poet alone could see the past in perspective and could uniquely see and believe in the "vistas" that the past had made necessary.

WHITMAN published *Democratic Vistas* himself in Washington. (He set the type for the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855.) It was 1871, a low year in the fortunes of the republic and a typically low year in the life of Walt Whitman. Characteristically, he made up the text of this new prose testament, as he always did with his prose "ensembles," by rummaging among his old prose pieces. He hurriedly combined two articles from *Galaxy* magazine—one on "Democracy" (December 1867), one on "Personalism" (May 1868), and parts of a third, "Orbic Literature," not accepted by the magazine.

At fifty-two, Whitman was prematurely aged, visibly slowing up, usually broke, and still generally neglected. His stock with what he often complains of in the *Vistas* as the "literary class" was still very low. He was certainly more notorious now than he had been in 1855. But in 1871 his reputation more resembled that of Allen Ginsberg publishing *Howl* than it did Virgil and the Sir Walter Scott Whitman kept invoking as his epic predecessors.

Whitman's real failure after the Civil War had been to find a new audience with the material he had collected as a volunteer "nurse" in Washington. *Drum-Taps*, ending with the great elegy on Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," had been contemptuously dismissed by the "literary class." Henry James and William Dean Howells, representative of the realistic novelists who were soon to dominate American writing, both reviewed *Drum-Taps* scornfully. Ironically, the little vignettes of war in *Drum-Taps* are often in the new realistic style. But it took James almost thirty years more to come around to Whitman, and then more out of homesickness than out of critical appreciation. The Whitman whose closest if not most public friendship was with the streetcar conductor Peter Doyle wanted not only "amativeness" and "comradeship" but recognition by the "native literatus." He was getting admired in England. William Michael Rossetti brought out a selection of Whitman's poems, Swinburne's book on Blake found a parallel in Whitman, Tennyson wrote an admiring letter. Anne Gilchrist, widow of Blake's biographer, fell in love with Whitman through his poems and actually came to America to urge him (unsuccessfully) to marry her. But at home recognition took the form of special pleading by such heated partisans as William O'Connor (who dubbed him the Good Gray Poet) and such amiable "nature writers" as John Burroughs, whose *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person* Whitman was helping to write.

On his annual vacations to his native Brooklyn and New York, Whitman found himself still more a curiosity than the poet who had confidently written in 1855: "An individual is as superb as a nation when he has the qualities which make a superb nation. The soul of the largest and wealthiest and proudest nation may well go halfway to meet that of its poets." Still the outsider, Whitman was irritated and depressed by the inflated prosperity and tawdry display of it in "his" New York. It contrasted all too sharply with his own poverty and the brave show he had put up, in his own New York days before the war, as a local celebrity—radical democrat and loose-living journalist. He had been quite a cock of the walk around New York; he was now an eccentric and faintly seedy figure, a self-acclaimed genius who was still a government clerk in Washington only because friends in the service had vouched that his book was not "indecent."

In the midst of New York's war-propelled millionaires and their conspicuous ostentation, the New York of Jim Fiske and Jay Gould and their florid ladies, Whitman (whose ideal woman was a "clean" gray-haired matriarch) was moved to passionate complaint against his own society:

> . . . society, in these States, is canker'd, crude, superstitious, and rotten. . . . I say we had best look our times and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. . . . The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women, nor the women in the men. . . . The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. . . . The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. In fashionable life, flippancy, tepid amours, weak infidelism, small aims, or no aims at all, only to kill time. In business (this all-devouring modern word, business), the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain. . . . The best class show but a mob of fashionably dress'd speculators and vulgarians. . . .

It was typical of Whitman's democratic idealism not to relate this materialism and "infidelism" to the huge profits made out of the war—though he was quick to lament the contrast New York in the late 1860's made with the always "heroic" picture of wounded and dying soldiers he had witnessed as a volunteer nurse in the Washington hospitals. He

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had made a gigantic all-purposive patriotic myth out of the Civil War—no other American writer would come near the level of Whitman's patriotic exaltation about the war. It was now clear to him. amid the political corruption of Washington and the open crookedness of New York, that his failure to gain expected recognition as a great national poet was somehow connected to this. America was in a moral crisis far more dismaying than the Civil War. The Gilded Age put to question all his intuitive assumptions about unlimited democracy.

At the same time Whitman's worldly failure could be explained by the degeneration of American politics and business. The wrong people were in charge. Literature itself had gone off the tracks. With all the "accretions" he was making to *Leaves of Grass* in the Gilded Age, his ambition in "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"—to confer upon America the holy trinity of poet-president-nature, Whitman-Lincoln-America—was not *understood*. An age of belief had passed, and with it the "tremendous fervid IDEA." Although he had shown himself a realist of sorts in the snapshots of soldier life in *Drum-Taps*, everything in Whitman cried out against a realism for realism's sake, since this called for the artist to remove himself from his own work.

But Whitman realized that he could not simply bewail himself, for that would eliminate the dominating myth necessary to his poetry. He could not concentrate on attacking corruption and "weak infidelism" without falling into polemical journalism. What was necessary to *Democratic Vistas* was a reassertion of his faith in poetry and democracy so resounding and complete that it would lift the discussion of current American problems to a new level. It would shame the corrupt, restore the sense of transcendent values—that light from "another world," as he put it in "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads"—and reach into the future. Always an inspired maker of titles, he was never more inspired than when he hit upon *Democratic Vistas*. Here was democracy as both subject and object, both the perceiver and the perceived. Democracy as vision was one that could reach back into the classic republic in order to embrace the future.

The terms of Whitman's apocalyptic reach were the poet as epic hero, the poet as herald of his country's greatness and even as maker and shaper of its destiny. I have noted that Whitman was very little influenced by the language and style of other *poets*—he was a homemade original, all compact of his idiosyncratic genius even in what Henry James was to mock as Whitman's "too extensive knowledge of foreign languages"—*Democracy ma femme, Allons, camerado*. But as he so assertively made clear in a long footnote early in *Democratic Vistas*, he did place himself among the epic poets, the great national artists. Whitman's personal mastery of his own art was perhaps a secret even to himself; it certainly remains one. But his most conscious ambition was to poetry as the most essential and traditional view of a particular culture. This was his greatest hope and most sought-after consolation: to be the poet of the American people, a standard that his master Emerson had been too aloof and apolitical to meet. The poet was not just representative of his country's past—of its underlying and unconscious myth—he was to summon it to its future.

Whitman, like Lincoln, Mazzini, Hugo, Dostoevsky, represents 19th-century nationalism in its "orbic," most exalted state. The great French historian Fernand Braudel notes that "before the nationalism of the 19th century, people felt united only by the bonds of religious belief; in other words, by civilization." American nationhood, though created as much by conquest and expropriation as by the "great idea," was raised in Whitman—as his old friend Alexander Stephens said of Lincoln—to "religious mysticism." Whitman had his own way of interpreting "manifest destiny." He did not call America "holy," as Dostoevsky and other Slavophiles called their country "Holy Russia." But Whitman might have understood what Dostoevsky had Stavrogin say in *The Possessed:* "I'm raising the nation to God. And indeed, has it ever been otherwise? A people forms the body of its god. A nation is a nation only so long as it has its particular god and excludes as irreconcilable all other gods; so long as it believes that with the help of its god it will conquer and destroy all other gods. All great nations have so believed since the beginning of time. . . ."

"All *great* nations. . . ." Neither Dostoevsky nor Whitman saw himself as the folklorist of a negligible country. But the "great nation" was of a greatness yet-to-be. Whitman saw America as still unformed, its essential final attribute to be conferred on it by literature. Religion minus supernaturalism was now to yield its best influence to literature. "The priest departs," Whitman wrote exultantly, "the divine literatus comes." Even science would speak for man's evolutionary development into a "higher" and more "spiritual" sphere. Even the staggering expansion of the United States (Whitman quoted in a footnote Vice President Colfax's bragging statistics) testified to the fact that the possibilities were all there. The promise of American life was the modern gospel. And the poet as prophet, "singer," "combiner" was there to prove that America's unique offering was "lessons of variety and freedom" as great "as the greatest lessons of Nature through the universe."

The American mission, in short, was the most intensely natural one imaginable. Life in its most overflowing possibilities would no longer be curtailed. Poetry was the bond by which people would recognize their own unexplored possibilities, or as we now say, their unconscious. So poetry would

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make democracy *live*: by easing the individual's recognition of himself.

Was there ever, in the light of the century since *Democratic Vistas*, such a seeming romantic irrelevance as Whitman's ringing declaration?

> I say that democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology, displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences. . . . There is one need, a hiatus the profoundest, that no eye seems to perceive, no voice to state. Our fundamental want in the United States, with closest, amplest deference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, literatuses, far different, far higher in grade than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into a new breath of life. . . .
>
> View'd today, from a point of view sufficiently over-arching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature. The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. Never was anything more wanted than, today, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted, or the great literatus of the modern. . . . Above all previous lands, a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance (in some respects the sole reliance) of American democracy.

It probably never occurred to Whitman that he might not be the best proponent of this position. His passionate, vascular, ultimately self-celebrating prose could make as many difficulties for his argument as the headlong materialistic expansion of the United States. *Democratic Vistas* has too often been honored simply because Whitman wrote it and because it is so intense a statement about larger matters—in the voice of the poet who sometimes seems to make the largest possible claim for poetry *because* he feels unrecognized. But in point of fact Whitman never tries to "prove" his claim for poetry, as the great romantic poets did from Wordsworth's preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* to Emerson's amazingly intuitive "The Poet." The fact is that Whitman wrote prose, as he wrote poetry, in great musical sweeps and chords, in magnificent sound effects. He convinces, as he said elsewhere, "by my presence": he becomes the voice, the authority, the almighty friend he claims to be. "But preluding no longer, let me strike the keynote of the following strain. . . . I shall use the words America and democracy as convertible terms. Not an ordinary one is the issue. The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time."

Whitman was too stirred and impatient when he wrote the essays "Democracy" and "Personalism"—and especially when he "hastily toss'd them together"—to analyze his position for the unconverted. He was making an avowal of himself. And the rhapsodic affirmations of poetry, the keen cutting criticisms of American society, the abundant contradictions, are bound up with Whitman's inevitable form of monologue, sonata, oratory, dithyrambic self-celebration.

Thus one of the weaknesses of *Democratic Vistas*, if we look at it purely as a political essay, seems to be the overflowing contradictoriness about Whitman's ability to see every side at once, that was exactly Whitman's gift as a poet of unlimited "vistas." Kafka once noted that Whitman "combined the contemplation of nature and civilization, which are apparently contradictory, into a single intoxicating vision of life." In *Democratic Vistas* Whitman scathingly attacks American money-making and business, then turns around to say that "My theory includes riches." And note that the power and richness of New York "completely satisfy my sense of power, fullness, motion, etc. and give me, *through my aesthetic conscience*, a continued exaltation and absolute fulfillment." He took it for granted that any American could still become rich. His real position is that a country so full of "power, fullness, motion," shows such a marvelous energy, fulfillment, that the inequalities (of which he did not have too much to say) and the corruption (obviously temporary) are as nothing. *America* was a success, made a great human picture. So he proudly echoes Vice President Colfax's Fourth of July brag: "From a territorial area of less than nine hundred thousand square miles, the Union has expanded into over four millions and a half. . . ."

Whitman always saw things in chords, in combination. He never really distinguished between democracy as a new revelation and America as brute economic power; he combined the "fervid tremendous IDEA" with what Americans in the age of big business have naively but more honestly come to call "the system." Whitman's all-too-musical way of thinking, which led him so beautifully to praise music as "the combiner," also led him to fuse all his favorite images of America in ways that, to our disenchanted generation, may just seem remote.

They were not remote to Whitman. There lies at the heart of *Democratic Vistas* the desperate, unprovable belief that America is more than its history. America was not being true to its essential premise of democracy unlimited, which meant the individual in command of his own soul. The greatest possible model of this was the poet, who had the fullest access to "nature"—to the unconscious and unrealized. All great countries have had great poets. Since a great national poet is the inspiration, the combining, formative spirit of a true

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democracy, the *seeming* failure of democracy since the Civil War can be identified with America's failure to make the fullest possible use of Walt Whitman.

The logic of this, though doubtful to other people, was nevertheless so compelling to Whitman that it is important to realize that just this claim made him the great "poet of democracy" to non-Americans still struggling for democracy. Whitman was appreciated in hidebound, time-bound England by those literary men and pioneer socialists for whom America was still what it had been to thinkers as different as Blake and Tocqueville: the country of democracy, where any man could find a place. Democracy still meant the masses, the common people; it was exactly Whitman's faith that no one should be denied his chance, that great men (like Walt Whitman) came out of the masses, that endeared him to those living in a restrictive class society. It was not necessary to *prove* that democracy was better: it was just important to believe it and *live* it, as Whitman did in his writing.

EXACTLY a century after *Democratic Vistas,* it is clear that America has welcomed the masses and (incidentally?) that it has realized human change on a mass scale beyond anything in recorded history. Yet there has never been a time in America when the idea of democracy has been so much doubted—and typically, on a mass scale. Whitman lived in a century when religion was openly passing into secular creeds; but today religion seems more and more a private, almost "eccentric" pastime, with no obvious application to society. The individual's "realization" of his deepest hopes has to do with economic advancement and security, not the perfection of his "soul." The false and tendentious identification of democracy with capitalism has become so complete that as a natural corollary the enemies of capitalism become, all too willingly, the enemies of democracy. Carlyle in "Shooting Niagara: And After?," the 1867 essay that helped provoke Whitman into *Democratic Vistas,* said in absolute contempt for the masses that the danger of democracy was that its claims had no limit. He decried the "velocity increasing" of democracy and worried that England would have "to take the Niagara leap of completed Democracy one day. . . ." This, Carlyle said with his usual brutality, meant "Swarmery" and "The Nigger Question." Carlyle's "Shooting Niagara" was provoked by "this delirious new reform measure" of 1867 (the Parliamentary Reform Act, which enfranchised the working class in the towns and was the first reform act since 1832):

> It accelerates notably what I have long looked upon as inevitable: pushed us at once into the Niagara Rapids; irresistibly propelled, with ever-increasing velocity we shall now arrive; who knows how soon! . . .
>
> Certain it is, that there is nothing but vulgarity in our People's expectations, resolutions or desires, in this Epoch. It is all a peaceable mouldering or tumbling down from mere rottenness and decay; whether slowly mouldering or rapidly tumbling, there will be found nothing real or true in the rubbish-heap, but a most true desire of making money easily, and of eating it pleasantly.

The solution, Carlyle interestingly went on, was to discipline all this chaos and restlessness into a fixed thing. "To change *nomadic* contract into *permanent*; to annihilate the soot and dirt and squalid horror now defacing this England, once so clean and comely while it was poor. . . . One often wishes the entire Population could be thoroughly drilled; . . . ultimately the point of actual *Military Service* should be required of it. . . ."

Carlyle understood, as well as any fascist or Communist of our day, that fear is the fear of other people's freedom. Whitman's belief in democracy pure and simple, democracy as an ethical absolute, democracy as our obligation to others *who are a form of ourselves,* was not to be shared by believers in "free enterprise," by the robber barons in his time and by the monopolists in ours. Nor was it to be shared by the bureaucracy that came in with the crisis of the 1930's and that has steadily solidified itself through World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the permanent war economy. Even the student rebels of the 1960's, who often lived like Whitman's ideal comrades of the "open road," nevertheless found it more natural to admire authoritarian China, Albania, North Vietnam, Cuba than the "Amerika" that rocked with their protests. Watergate, though in the end presumably a victory of the Congress and the people over the conspirators in the White House, is too often blamed by our "opinion-makers" not on the conspirators but on democracy itself.

Democracy in America today is certainly very far from being the totally "open society" that Whitman believed in. Whitman could not have conceived that a "secret government" in Washington would think of the American people as enemies. He could not have anticipated the kind of intimidation that mass culture and mass opinion have made possible in an age of incessant propaganda, hysterical journalism, excessive social organization, technological manipulation. His "naive," old-fashioned idea of democracy as an open invitation to *everybody* is certainly not shared by his fellow writers in America. The writer in America is too often the most contemptuous critic of democracy, though it is still not possible for him to say so plainly. Totalitarian horrors have given the lie to the old American faith in human nature, and the natural specialization and professionalization of intellect in a technological age—to say nothing of the writer's lower-

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ed prestige—has made many an American writer feel that he must defend art *from* the masses. Amidst the scandals and crises that rocked the United States in the second administration of Richard Nixon, Gore Vidal wrote this new version of *Democratic Vistas*:

> Political corruption has been with us since the first Congress at Philadelphia, and there is nothing to be done about it as long as we are what we are. In fact, as election costs mount, the corruption will tend to be institutionalized by the small group of legislators and bankers, generals and industrialists who own and govern the United States, Inc. But it does not take great prescience to realize that they are playing a losing game. As the polity becomes more and more conscious of the moral nullity at the center of American life, there will develop not the revolutionary situation dreamed of in certain radical circles but, rather, a deep contempt for the nation and its institutions, an apathy bound to be exploited by clever human engineers. In the name of saving the environment and restoring virtue, they will continue the dismantling of an unloved and unhonored republic. But then republics are social anomalies, as Thomas Jefferson must have suspected when he claimed to see, off there in the distance, no larger than a Federalist's head, the minatory shape of the despot's crown. . . .

The argument is without nuance, the disaffection is savage. The writer recites with joyous assurance "the dismantling of an unloved and unhonored republic"—with perfect contempt for the people who make it up. It was contempt that Whitman identified with the second-rate: perfect vanity, or intelligence without vision and without hope. Intellectuals are always the first to feel despair. Is it possible that Whitman's "vistas," his ultimately positive vision of the future, still appeals least of all to the intellectual class, to the American writer? Is he still, among his own, the great outsider? He would have minded, but not too much. Of course Whitman took the *republic* for granted. It was "democracy" he was pleading for, democracy within an American mind that had already gone too far to turn back.

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Mumford's Utopia

Roger Starr

THE publication last year of Lewis Mumford's twenty-fifth book, *Findings and Keepings* ("Analects for an Autobiography"),* coincided with his eightieth birthday and provides the occasion for a brief look at the work of a man of whom it is easy to say that he has had an immense influence on his time. The precise nature of that influence, however, is difficult to clarify. Mumford's ideas have been effectual primarily in the fields of architecture and city and town planning, where he has attracted the most public attention. Yet despite having won gold medals from both the Royal Institute of British Architects and the British Town Planning Institute, he is neither architect nor planner. Nor, since he has never held governmental office, has he had the chance to impose his ideas on even a single city, as many other non-architects and non-planners have managed to do, Robert Moses and Edward Logue coming to mind at once.

Mumford's influence on his time, then, has been largely indirect, exerted through the impact of his writing on those with immediate responsibility for shaping the urban world, or, perhaps more relevantly, on the educated public whose ideas define the area within which planners and developers may act. Here again, Mumford presents something of an anomaly. For those writings of his which specifically discuss architecture, structures, and the nature of government sponsorship of buildings are the aspect of his work that he himself holds in the lowest esteem, as compared with his "serious" books on art and social history, technological development, and literary activity.

Nevertheless, it seems likely that many who revere Mumford do so not on the basis of those "profound" and on the whole boring works, but because of the practical criticism which he himself takes most lightly, and which he has chosen to omit entirely from his current book, as well as from its immediate predecessor, *Interpretations and Forecasts, 1922–1972.* (That volume pointedly was described on its jacket as containing all of Mumford's "essential thought.") What Mumford does publish in these volumes is difficult to read, which is probably a good thing for his public esteem. For the direction of Mumford's "essential thought" runs counter to the goal which most of his admiring readers cherish (and mistakenly think, from reading his practical criticism, that *he* cherishes)—the survival of the cities in something like their present form, with their major shortcomings removed and their beauties emphasized.

Mumford's practical criticism consists mainly of essays on architecture and related problems of urban design and planning which have appeared over the years in the *New Yorker.* Whatever Mumford's opinion of them, they are deservedly popular as architectural criticism, combining basic affection for their subject with sensible judgments about specific characteristics and managing to convey the experience of a building to even the least well-prepared reader. A brief review of how Mumford operates in this area might begin with his scrutiny of the contemporary use of glass as the exterior surface for high-rise office buildings. Glass, in Mumford's view, is used perversely for such a purpose, and represents the triumph of technological abandon over good sense. He admits that a building clad in glass offers a previously unobtainable range of architectural effects—no one has written more glowingly than Mumford about the glass walls of the UN Secretariat building in New York—but he insists that the several consequent costs overwhelm them. In an essay entitled "The Case Against Modern Architecture," Mumford explains that the interior space of a glass-walled building is inevitably irrational. The transparency seems to promise contact with sunlight and fresh air, but it produces quite the opposite effect: layers of hermetically sealed cubes. Mumford also complains about the lack of walls against which to arrange furniture and the lack of privacy which the glass imposes.†

Yet for all that Mumford seems to be talking about a technological issue in his discussion of glass walls, what he really objects to is the office buildings clothed by those walls. Indeed, his dislike of modern office buildings antedates by far the advent of the glass wall. As early as 1924, when he published *Sticks and Stones* (described by him as a study of American architecture and civilization), Mumford was hurling invectives at the "skyscrapers" which were then attracting Euro-

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* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 398 pp., $15.00.

† To these criticisms, two new ones might be added. Glass-sheathed buildings offer a potential fire hazard because the unopenable windows make ventilation dependent on a system of mechanical blowers and ducts, extraordinarily well adapted to spreading smoke throughout a building while shielding its source. Secondly, though designers have become very imaginative in curving the walls of glass sheathing, technicians have so far been less successful in calculating how the panes are to be kept in place. Falling glass sheets have become a deadly menace in several cities.

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pean attention as glorious examples of the same naive American culture which had already produced Negro spirituals and hot dogs. As with his complaint about glass, Mumford's criticism of skyscrapers was ostensibly founded on the objective shortcomings of these big buildings: their inhuman scale, their heavy shadows, their siting difficulties which made it impossible for observers on the ground to perceive their dramatic perpendiculars without interference from other structures, and, finally, their disruption of the harmony and integrity of all other adjacent buildings.

In both of these cases, the fundamental reason for Mumford's antipathy lay not in anything having to do with matters of technology or form; it was a question of function. The truth is that Mumford does not like office buildings because he does not like offices, and he dislikes offices because he dislikes the people who work there, and he dislikes office people because he dislikes the kind of work they do, or the life that they represent to him. That life, in a word, is not "organic."

MUMFORD's idea of the nearest real approach to an organic human settlement is the medieval city—limited in size, well-defined both geographically and socially by its walls and its religious and secular hierarchies, yet managing to contain a vast range of human activities. The medieval city boasted trade, manufacture, art, all the forms of religious celebration, and, in effect, no office workers (there was anyway no paper for them). In a manner reminiscent of T. S. Eliot, whose imagination reflected all those undone by the living death of modern office life in London, Mumford has looked for relief from modernity to a vision of medieval urban life served by its closeness to the natural world, its sharp distinction between town and country, and above all, perhaps, by its stasis, its resistance to any growth that might spoil the harmonious balance of achieved form.

Naturally, such a view of the city does not stand alone. Although Mumford has not worked out in any single book a consistent structure of ethical and political values, several ideas recur as a kind of outgrowth of his views on the medieval and modern city, and the importance of an organic life. First is a faith in a preexisting Golden Age whose equilibrium has mysteriously been disturbed. In an essay printed in *Daedalus* in 1965, Mumford goes beyond metaphor to state that such a period in human history *actually existed* at the end of the last Ice Age, when men lived in self-sustaining communities that were in perfect balance and without any "ruling class" to disturb their equanimity.

For Mumford, men are essentially good; the political, cultural, and racial differences that make for animosity and hatred are the products of external sources, principally the machine. Reaching back into the past, Mumford has suggested that the first machine, the "megamachine," was a *political* engine whose moving parts were not wheels but people, differentiated by role like the pins, cams, pistons, and shafts of a diesel engine. This primordial act of political differentiation he ascribes to the self-glorifying religious aims of the kings who established the first cities.

YET even though he uses the very word "machine" as a metaphor for the most devastating human and political arrangements, Mumford is not against technology *per se*. Indeed, he has a vision of a more humane technology which, he asserts, existed in past civilizations and which at some indeterminate future time can be made to serve the purposes of man once again. His theory, as set forth in *Technics and Civilization*, divides Western technology into three phases: Eotechnic, Paleotechnic, and Neotechnic. The Eotechnic period was that long beneficent stretch of history during which power to run machinery was offered to man by his own muscular efforts, by the muscular efforts of beasts, by waterfalls, and, to a much lesser extent, by wind. The Paleotechnic period, whose beginnings coincided with the decay of the medieval city and which lasted roughly until the early 20th century, saw the introduction of a technology deriving its power from the earth—from peat, lignite, coal, and finally petroleum. When he wrote *Technics and Civilization*, Mumford believed that we were in the early stages of a hopeful new period, Neotechnic civilization, in which power would be derived primarily from electricity. He regarded electricity as a non-polluting source, and forecast that the communication techniques of the electrical period would make possible a return to organic life through a much wider dispersal of population with a consequent reduction of urban densities of habitation and commercial intercourse.

The villain of Mumford's scheme is of course the Paleotechnic period. He is particularly caustic on the subject of mining, which he regards as an effrontery to the body of Mother Earth, one properly punished by the lives miners must lead, huddled in ugly villages, bent and disease-ridden in their bodily frames, their organic tone lost because of their exclusion from the world of sunlight, air, and trees.

Mumford's classification, however, does not explain how one technological period changes into another, or why men should ever have abandoned the organic life of their fathers if, indeed, it was so satisfactory. As with all thinkers who begin with the assumption of the essential goodness of man and nature, Mumford suffers from an inability to explain the existence of evil. Thus he tells us that it is evil to mine the earth, but the only reason he offers for the persistence of mining is that capitalists have forced men into doing this evil thing. He does not tell us how capitalists became evil in the first place, or why mining should thrive in a country like the Soviet Union whose leaders are presumably free of all capitalistic influence.

If the organic life is diffcult to define precisely in positive terms, one may nevertheless list those aspects of the modern city which are furthest removed from it. Mumford equates these characteristics with *the* present problems of the city, even though they may not be so perceived by those who actually live and work in the cities today. Mumford's thinking here has been influenced by the sharp contrast be-

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tween urban and village life in the early 19th century: the horrendous density of habitation produced by clustering around factories whose sites were themselves determined by the availability of water power and later of steam. To explain urban crowding today, despite the increased flexibility offered by electricity, Mumford puts the "speculator," who he says increases land value, in a place corresponding to that of the capitalist in mining. Yet in this case too, he has things backward. What gives land its value is the significance of the uses to which it may be put, and even countries which have nationalized their land have a hard time determining what should be done with those plots suitable for the greatest number of potentially significant uses. The speculator simply responds to his view of facts like transportation capability, degree of industrial development, location of publicly and privately financed amenities, and so forth. In other words, it is land values that create speculators, not the other way around.

When the uses of urban land decline in importance, as is now the case in many of the older cities of the Eastern seaboard of the United States, values also decline, despite the presence of the same speculators who allegedly made those values rise in the first place. As the value declines, so does the density of habitation. It has become clear that low densities, carried to extremes, are as painful as high densities carried to extremes. Low densities make the provision of city services prohibitively expensive, while the thinning out of apartment-house residents clearly makes the operation of such a building uneconomical; one result has been the abandonment of houses altogether, and a gross and appalling mismatch between the wealth-producing capacity of the city and the costs of providing public amenities for its inhabitants.

CONCENTRATING on a problem—excessive density—which has long been in the process of solving itself, Mumford has advocated his own solution, the development of new towns. Indeed, in recent years he has probably been singlehandedly responsible for the attention given to this concept by American urban theorists and social planners. Mumford's own model is the New Town movement of Great Britain, whose leading theorist, Ebenezer Howard, published his basic tract, *Garden Cities of the Future*, in the 1890's. That book recommended the acquisition of large tracts of open land which were then to be used for the development of cities containing new industries, residences, and all of the other attributes of large cities, but with population to be limited to approximately 50,000 people.

The New Town movement in this country (and Britain as well) now concedes that larger populations are needed, but it continues to appeal to the romantic sentiment that the problems of the old central cities can be left behind, and that in a new environment a beneficent, dedicated, non-political governmental order can be imposed on the slovenly process of public growth. This is not only a mirage with respect to new towns, but a delusion with respect to old cities. The same urban difficulties, inescapably human, revive in the new settings, and meanwhile the real difficulties of city life in the 20th century—race, poverty, and the technological obsolescence of manufacturing and commercial facilities—are overlooked and ignored.

The New Town ideology rationalizes an abandonment of the older cities by proclaiming the creation of beauty the crucial social challenge of our time. It is precisely in this spirit that major corporations are abandoning the urban office building for suburban garden headquarters. To Mumford, aesthetic values are the supreme values of human experience. Believing that well-designed buildings affect human life for the better, he also believes that however obscure the process, essentially good people will recover their essential goodness when they remove themselves from slum buildings and place their families in low-density, happily designed new community environments. The trouble with this is that in the real world all calculations as to what must be done with cities, and how population is to be distributed, and at what density, must start not with aesthetics but with economics. In concentrating on the physical surroundings of life without attending to the economic limitations on what can be done, Mumford's work has turned the attention of civic-minded leaders away from the painful calculation of the economically possible, and suggested to them that, since the value of low densities and beautiful architecture is absolute, the resources to support them must always be available in a good society.

THE central problems in Mumford's thought can perhaps be summarized in his attitude toward the Brooklyn Bridge, a structure whose beauty has repeatedly engaged his imagination and inspired his awe. He has written enthusiastically about the thrilling curves of the four great suspension cables and the roadway itself, and about the unique emphasis, in this bridge, on the suspending elements in contrast with the roadway. For Mumford, this equalizing tension between suspending and suspended elements dramatizes, above all, the conquest of gravity through pure imagination. Yet in his play about the bridge which appears in *Findings and Keepings*, the vast powers of mind which went into solving the technical problems presented by the bridge's construction are set in gloomy contrast to its builders' ignorance and conceptual poverty when it came to questions of value or the philosophical *meaning* of technology. Thus, the character in the play who seems most closely to represent the author's point of view chides the bridge's visionary builders for their avoidance of questions of final value which, he says, must come before the achievement of technics.

It is tempting to argue this question with Mumford; the question, that is, of whether the conscious goals of society, its basic conceptions, shape its technology, or whether the technology shapes the articulation of its goals. But no one living in the city of the Brooklyn Bridge today would accord an urgent priority to this ponderous discussion. The simple fact is that no

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matter how evil the Paleotechnic era may now appear to Mumford, *it* is what made the bridge possible. One cannot disengage from the incidental horrors of the Paleotechnic era the wrought-iron wires (the first used in construction) and the compressed-air submarine caissons (powered by steam engines) in which the foundation diggers worked. The urban social environment is what made possible the human coordination, assembled the resources, and provided the nourishment to keep the labor force working through the twelve years during which the bridge was built. Finally, the continued survival today of that glorious artifact—the bridge itself—depends on the grubby business of keeping its cables and girders painted, and this humble maintenance procedure in turn depends on the wealth of the municipality, and this in turn depends on a continuing balance between the wealth of the city and its expenses.

The trouble with Mumford's work is that it is in the end self-defeating. Failing to distinguish immediate necessities, and refusing to answer present questions in a search for more "profound" answers, it sows a fatal confusion between the needs of this world and the illusory possibilities of recapturing or bringing to birth a Golden Age.

Music

Richard Strauss & His Critics

Samuel Lipman

THOUGH his later operas are all but ignored in current American musical life, the fact that no fewer than four earlier operas by Richard Strauss have been produced in New Yok City alone this season—*Salome* at the City Opera, and *Elektra, Der Rosenkavalier,* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Met—and the fact that Robert Craft, a prominent critic long associated with a hostile position on Strauss, has recently been writing sympathetically about him, raise the interesting possibility that a new valuation of Strauss may be in the making. If so, this would be a phenomenon of great cultural significance, for of the small number of undeniably major composers who have written a major body of serious music since World War II—that watershed in the formation of our cultural times—Richard Strauss is undoubtedly the least esteemed by the literate musical community.

To some extent his reputation has suffered from the fact that he continued, without public protest, to live and work in Germany after Hitler came to power. But the stigma attached to Strauss's political behavior cannot explain the low regard in which he is held. For one thing, he was no more a Nazi than he was a hero. An aging man with a beloved Jewish daughter-in-law and two *verjudelt* grandchildren, he chose the path of discretion rather than the path of honor, making only those concessions—they were many but small—which seemed to him necessary for survival. In any case, Strauss's reputation had already suffered a precipitous decline long before the Nazis arrived on the scene. Politics was certainly involved in the decline, but it was the politics of culture, not politics in the ordinary sense.

Strauss first came to public notice as a modernist. While still a budding, little-known composer, he had seemed to be allied with the conservative camp of Brahms; but with the writing of *Don Juan* in 1888, and then with the later group of tone poems—*Tod und Verklärung* (1889), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896), *Don Quixote* (1897), and *Ein Heldenleben* (1898)—Strauss became the inheritor, continuator, and developer of the tradition of Wagner and Liszt, the foremost living practitioner of the "music of the future," a music which went far beyond the strict form of the classical symphony and into new areas of harmony, orchestration, and extra-musical associations. Finally, with the operas *Salome* (1904-05) and *Elektra* (1906-08), both of which luxuriated musically in the depiction of perverse passion and pathology, Strauss's position as the leading modernist composer of the day was confirmed.

But *Elektra* was to prove an end for Strauss, not a beginning. It was to be followed, in *Der Rosenkavalier* (1909-10), not with the depiction of new perversions, of new admirably painful pleasures, but rather with a comedy set in the 18th-century Vienna of Maria Theresa. And instead of the grating dissonances of *Elektra,* the musical texture of *Rosenkavalier* was based upon the sentimental sweetness of the 19th-century Viennese waltz.

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As if this were not "reactionary" enough, his next opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1911-16), with a libretto sympathetic to the values of love and fidelity, made use of musical styles going back even beyond Mozart all the way to Lully and his succeeding operas, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1917), *Intermezzo* (1923), *Arabella* (1932), *Die schweigsame Frau* (1935), *Friedenstag* (1936), *Daphne* (1937), *Die Liebe der Danae* (1940), and *Capriccio* (1941), all dramatically inventive and richly melodic, confirmed and reconfirmed, in their conservative choice of theme and musical style, Strauss's apostasy from modernism.

FOR THIS, he was amply punished by critical opinion, either modernist in its vision of a desirable art or simply willing to use the modernist cudgel to reinforce the position of firmly established classics. As early as 1915, Carl Van Vechten, an effective American publicist for the latest artistic thing, dismissed Strauss as an original artistic force; another important American modernist critic, Paul Rosenfeld, writing in 1920 what he thought was Strauss's musical obituary, called him "the false dawn of modern music." And in 1924 the English critic, Cecil Gray, in a generally dismissive survey of new music, declared:

> Hailed on his appearance as the successor of Wagner—Richard the Second—only some ten years ago, still for most people the most commanding force in modern music, he is today, apart from Germany and Austria, almost ignored by the leaders of progressive musical opinion. No composer of such formerly unquestioned eminence has ever suffered such a startling change of fortune, such a sudden and decisive reversal of a favorable verdict.

In his influential *Opera as Drama* (1956), an examination of opera as a dramatic form which reserved most of the highest marks for pre-20th-century works, Joseph Kerman quoted these last words of Gray, and added some of his own, calling *Rosenkavalier*—as well as the previously sacrosanct *Salome* and *Elektra*—

> impossible today . . . anything he touched he soiled as pervasively as the waltz soiled the texture of his music.

And finally, Brockway and Weinstock, in their popular *Men of Music* (1958), summarized the criticisms of all the later pieces of Strauss as follows:

> The fair thing is to treat Richard Strauss as a man who died in 1911. One of the most fascinating, if finally insoluble problems in music criticism is to try to discover the causes of his premature demise.

That this is still the accepted view is clear from Charles Rosen's brilliantly received book of last year on Arnold Schoenberg. There Rosen praises Strauss for his "disinterested courage" in writing *Salome* and *Elektra* with "their extreme chromaticism and . . . their representation of pathological states" and accuses him of "final cowardice" because he then "quickly retreated into 18th-century pastiche and the delicious Viennese pastry of *Der Rosenkavalier*."

Though many reasons have been suggested for the supposed decline of Strauss's music, ranging from creative impotence to simple laziness, it is entirely characteristic of modernist ideology that the change in Strauss's work should so often have been attributed to the basest of motives: the love of money. Thus, for example, Paul Rosenfeld speculated that "Strauss's desire for incessant gain is a sort of perversion, a mania that has gotten control over him because his energies are inwardly prevented from taking their logical course, and creating works of art." And Brockway and Weinstock tell us that Strauss "was as much businessman as musician," and that "the final key to his failure lies in his richly successful career." The reply of Strauss to such criticism was succinct: "Earning money in a decent way for wife and child is no disgrace—even for an artist."

OF COURSE Strauss's music is not only his best but must ultimately be his only defense against such charges. On this issue, there can be no doubt about one point at least: that, stripped of extra-musical factors—literary ideas, symbols, plots, aesthetic politics—Strauss's music, taken simply as music, is of great interest to those perhaps best qualified to pronounce judgment in such matters, performing musicians. Not only do the most distinguished conductors, singers, and instrumentalists remain committed to performing his major pieces, the tone-poems and the operas; his smaller pieces —the serenades, the horn and oboe *concerti*, his many songs—are also considered, because they represent a compendium of the composer's art, deeply satisfying to contemplate and to perform. Some of his music—the occasional orchestral pieces are among them—are not so considered, but it is my impression that Strauss, like Schoenberg, is secure as a musicians' composer. In addition, whenever such works as *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Arabella*, and *Capriccio* are staged, as they have been occasionally in this country and often are in Europe, they gratify an audience which, though still small, is probably larger than that for any other opera (with the possible exception of Berg's *Wozzeck*) written in the last sixty years.

Yet important as performers and performances are for insuring a composer's survival, it cannot be denied that such charges as have been brought against Strauss in the wider court of intellectual opinion are themselves relevant to the question of his survival and to his influence on our musical life. And to understand these charges, which obviously involve so much more than music, we must try to understand what Strauss was and what he did in terms which go beyond his recognized craftsmanship and melodic skill.

"Every nation," Strauss wrote toward the end of his life, "has a historic mission and once the mission is fulfilled it disappears. . . . The mission of the German nation was music and it was fulfilled with Richard Wagner." What then was a composer coming after Wagner to do? Strauss's answer in effect was to preserve and integrate the greatest values of the musical past. Thus, for example, at the same time as Octavian in *Rosenkavalier* and the composer in *Ariadne* rep-

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resent Strauss's image of himself as an ardent, impulsive youth, they harken back to Mozart's Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. In similar fashion the opera section of *Ariadne* can be seen as the most loving of gentle spoofs of Wagner's *Ring*, with the three Nymphs modeled musically on the Rhinemaidens and emotionally on their sisters in misery, the Norns; the love of Ariadne and Bacchus and their removal to privacy at the end of the opera inevitably suggests Siegfried's waking and wooing of Brünnhilde and their presumed wedding celebration on the flaming rock. A further example of Strauss's attempt to preserve and integrate the past was his *Metamorphosen* (1945), a study for twenty-three solo strings based on a motive from the Funeral March of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*.

In addition to thus linking his own work with the music of the past, Strauss transcribed and reworked for performance under modern conditions the music of Couperin, Gluck, Mozart, and Beethoven. That such musical procedures are no longer in fashion—that we would rather not listen to a piece than hear it in an altered version—cannot obscure the meaning of so loving an attention by a modern composer to the genius of the past.

IT HAS generally been realized for many years that with Strauss the book was closed on the greatest age music had ever known, the years from Bach to Strauss himself. What it was not possible to see clearly until now is that it was not the most highly praised works of Strauss—the tone poems, *Salome*, and *Elektra*—which terminated this age, but rather the music which Strauss continued to write until the end of his life. To use the pejorative term pastiche in describing this music, or to speak of commercialism or cowardice or cynicism or sterility in accounting for it, is to miss the meaning of Strauss's relation to tradition. For his enduring musical greatness lies in the fact that he summed the tradition up, including at the end—by quoting the great transfiguration theme from *Tod und Verklärung* (1889) in the final passage of the *Vier Letzte Lieder* (1948)—his own position within it.

Strauss's career thus represented an apostasy from modernism that was more than merely aesthetic: it embodied the rejection, by an admitted master and sometime prophet, of the central modernist commandment that the only morally permissible road to the future is through repudiation, dissolution, and destruction of the values of the past, and the creation of new values through violent transformation of self and society. While his music, because considered strictly as music it is so masterly, will not die, any recognition of Strauss as a great artistic figure—and the entry of his later operas into the international repertory—must await the development of a new attitude toward the modernist prescription in general. Whether the recent flurry of performances of Strauss and the new seriousness with which his music is now being discussed may point to the beginning of such a change remains to be seen.

NOTE

Though almost all Strauss's earlier works are available in many excellent performances, by no means are recordings of all the later works available at the present time. Of those recordings currently listed, the following should be mentioned:

Arabella (1932), Richmond S-63522
Capriccio (1941), DG 2709038
Concerto #2 for Horn (1942), DG 2530439
Concerto for Oboe (1945), Philips 6500174
Dance Suite after Couperin (1923), Seraphim S-60030
Four Last Songs (1948), Angel S-36347
Die Frau ohne Schatten (1917), Richmond 64503
Metamorphosen (1945), DG 2530066
Sonatina #1 for Sixteen Winds (1943), Philips 6500297
Sonatina #2 for Sixteen Winds (1945), Philips 6500097

In addition, two older historical recordings deserve mention here as examples of the work of performers closely associated with the composer himself:

Ariadne auf Naxos (1935 broadcast), conducted by Strauss's friend and collaborator, Clemens Krauss, BASF 21806
Der Rosenkavalier (abridged) with Lotte Lehmann and Elisabeth Schumann, Seraphim 6041

Theater

"The Old Glory" Reconsidered

Peter Shaw

WHEN *The Old Glory*, Robert Lowell's trilogy of plays, was first produced in 1964, it appeared to offer a new direction in American theater. Concerned with the materials of American history and literature, brooding, intellectual, yet punctuated by eruptions of violence, *The Old Glory* promised to satisfy the requirements of both intellectuals and theatergoers. Moreover, as Robert Brustein put it at the time, Lowell's plays also seemed to fulfill the requirements of literary modernism. They had "the thickness and authority of

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myth." In them, "ritual and metaphors abound; traditional literature and historical events begin to function like Greek mythology, as the source and reflection of contemporary behavior." Lowell, Brustein predicted, "may very well come to revolutionize the American theater."

Viewed at its recent revival by the American Place Theater, *The Old Glory* proves to have been prophetic enough, and not only of developments in the Amercian theater, but of cultural life in general. In fact, it anticipates the bitter anti-Americanism that seized hold of American writing for the remainder of the 1960's. Felt in these plays is the first shock of liberal guilt in response to the black protest movement and the beginning of the Vietnam war. Though inevitably, for a modernist like Lowell, the favored vehicles of expression remain those of ritual and myth (along with the verse techniques of T. S. Eliot's poetic dramas), *The Old Glory* gives evidence of an abandonment of the modernist values of difficulty and complexity in favor of espousing a cause.

In *The Old Glory* Lowell adapted three short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne and a short novel by Herman Melville. Interestingly, all of the tales represent attempts by two writers of the mid-19th century to comprehend "contemporary behavior" by exploring American history and myth. Like Lowell, Hawthorne and Melville adapted their sources, but, on the whole, they also adhered to them with remarkable fidelity. Just as the changes they imposed have long served scholars as measures of their intentions and accomplishment, so the changes made by Lowell in *his* materials serve to measure his intentions and accomplishment.

The first play, *Endecott and the Red Cross*, combines Hawthorne's "Endicott and the Red Cross" and "The May-Pole of Merry Mount." Both take place during the first years following the Puritan settlement of Massachusetts Bay in the 1620's. Lowell has well caught Hawthorne's implication that here are to be found the origins of American culture. Stretching the facts a bit, Hawthorne posits a rivalry between the stern Puritans of Boston and Salem, and the pleasure-loving followers of Thomas Morton at nearby Merry Mount. In Lowell's version the opposition is made obvious in the confrontation of the Puritan, Endecott, with Morton himself. Hawthorne, more symbolic in his method, never introduces Morton, expressing the opposition instead in terms of the contrasted behavior of the two communities.

Lowell's Endecott is a tired, cynical totalitarian whose hardness can be traced to sexual deprivation. He rides into Merry Mount (as in Hawthorne) to break up its May Day festivities. But once there he takes up the rest of the play with his musings. In these he appears much as one of Eliot's "hollow men." In contrast to Endecott, Thomas Morton is an expansive, pleasure-loving character who is yet a shrewd realist about human nature. By implication, Lowell's Morton is a racial egalitarian. He justifies the drinking, debauchery, and intermarriage with the Indians that goes on at Merry Mount as necessary outlets for human nature. Lowell, here employing not only Hawthorne but Hawthorne's sources as well, somewhat balances his approval of Morton by revealing that the guns he has sold to the Indians have been used to kill settlers. But this fact, which serves the Puritans as their excuse for invading Merry Mount, is dismissed by Morton's argument that the Puritans are as guilty as the Indians.

"I know you Puritans," says Morton. "You only care for profit; your holy thirst for mink and beaverskins drives you mad." The Puritans themselves, Morton suspects, have sold guns to the Indians. Their hypocritical persecution of Morton is, then, simply part of the Puritans' impulse to eliminate the Indian race.

As in Hawthorne, Lowell's Endecott shows some mercy to the Merry Mounters, even though egged on by a fanatical Puritan clergyman to punish them severely. In each of his plays Lowell introduces such an extra character to provide an interlocutor for his protagonist. Instead of using figures to draw out the moral complexities of the American character, however, he conveniently makes each of them an exacerbated reflection of the protagonists' ugly Americanness. Endecott has a prophetic dream of mass killing that all too obviously refers to America's future. Then, at the end, he summarily orders that the Indians he has taken prisoner be brought out and shot. In this first play, as in the last, a violent ending serves to display a prototypical American as the murderer of a subject race.

The contrasts between the humorless Puritans and the playful Merry Mounters, between the wintry prayers of the former and the summery dancing of the latter, all come from Hawthorne. But where Hawthorne looks at his oppositions with a questioning eye, Lowell points a finger of accusation. In each of his stories Hawthorne explores a second side of Endicott. In one case he endows him with that soldierly bravery which made America strong enough to withstand British control, and in the other he shows him moved by ideas of religious autonomy that may be linked directly to the American Revolution.

On the other hand, Hawthorne shows the Merry Mount flower children to have been as fanatical as the Puritans, just as their spiritual descendants proved themselves to be in the course of the 1960's. In Lowell's version, which is filled with innocent dancing, there is no hint of Hawthorne's reminder that "it was high treason to be sad at Merry Mount." The fate of America, for Hawthorne, lay in the manner in which its combination of cruel and admirable qualities would work themselves out. To symbolize the possibilities, he had Endicott place a wreath on the Merry Mount king and queen of the May and bring them to live at Salem—presumably to soften America's Puritan gloom. In Lowell the contrast is black-and-white, with the Puritans representing American greed and racism. His dramaturgy returns us to the manichean spirit of the Puritan imagination he had set out to reject.

IN HAWTHORNE'S "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" a young man

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from the country arrives one evening in early 18th-century Boston to look for the house of his wealthy and influential uncle. He asks his way of several people but finds himself mysteriously rebuffed by all —despite his explanation that he is come to make his fortune and that his uncle, Major Molineux, will reward anyone who shows him the way. His experience is rendered by Hawthorne as a phantasmagoric dream, though the real explanation proves to be a simple one: everyone he has met knows that Major Molineux is going to be tarred and feathered that night. The story ends with the young man witnessing his uncle's humiliation of being carted through the streets.

Modern critics have worked out the symbolism of this tale as a prophecy of the American Revolution. The young boy represents young America, which must break away from its dependence on a fostering England, represented by Major Molineux. In fact, the boy does join in the crowd's revolutionary frenzy (the tale is set some years before the actual Revolution). In one of the strangest and most compelling moments in Hawthorne's works, he first stands transfixed as he recognizes his uncle and then lets out a shout of mad, derisive laughter. It is a kind of personal coming of age that is at the same time historically predictive. Its cruelty is the cruelty both of revolution and of the break from one's parents.

Lowell's adaptation captures the unreal atmosphere of the search and something of the ritual of usurpation shared by the crowd and the young man. He splits the central character, giving him a younger brother for the purposes of dialogue, and he makes the story's theme explicit by setting it at the beginning of the Revolution, with British redcoats being taunted by the mob that later carts off Major Molineux. Molineux, a mysterious, unidentified figure in the tale, is made an outspoken Tory who has become particularly unpopular with the crowd. These changes obscure the personal theme of a young man's coming of age, and thus remove another of Hawthorne's fruitful ambiguities.

If Major Molineux is a representative of the establishment—to choose a term out of the 1960's—then the crowd is justified in punishing him and the story becomes a ritual celebration of the overthrow of tyranny. Hawthorne, however, presents a ritual of *succession*: the transfer of power in the family and the state from one generation to the next as a process with built-in elements of revolution. This is a profound and troubled way to conceive of revolution. It attempts to probe the dark, unconscious side of the American Revolution, just as the Endicott stories examined both sides of Puritanism.

This second play of Lowell's trilogy, by contrast, expresses the flirtation with violence that was indulged in by politically frustrated intellectuals in the 1960's; in omitting the ambiguous significance of the young man's experience as revealed in his horrid laugh at the end, it turns Hawthorne's study into a celebration of youth, of going into the streets and humiliating the establishment. The literary result is a play uncritical of violence and prophetic of the literary mode of the rest of the 60's.

THE last play in *The Old Glory* is about race, with Lowell again making explicit what is implied in his source: Melville's *Benito Cereno*. Here too there is a mystery, with an innocent American unable to plumb it until at the end it violently stares him in the face. The time is the beginning of the 19th century. An American captain, Amasa Delano, brings a gift of provisions on board a Spanish ship in distress off South America. The Spaniard is a trader and a slaver. Drifting practically out of control, its human cargo strangely lolling about the decks, and its captain, Benito Cereno, apparently ill, the ship presents a mystery. The truth is that it has been taken over by the African slaves, whose leader, Babo, is pretending to be Benito Cereno's body servant in order to keep next to him and control what he says.

Babu, as he is called in Lowell's version, is played by Rosco Lee Brown, who also starred in the original production. With his elaborate, unctuous servility, Brown manages to convey an unspecified menace. Captain Delano's suspicions, and the audience's, are directed at Benito Cereno, not Babu. Of the three plays, this one has the strongest claim to permanence, largely on account of the dramatic possibilities inherent in the role of Babu. In addition, Lowell occasionally departs to good effect from the unemphatic language of the earlier plays, conveying the languid, threatening atmosphere with versifications of Melville's own magnificent rhetoric.

But it is Captain Delano who speaks the poetic lines, and herein lies the problem with the play. The audience is not permitted to respond to Delano's language or sympathize with his perplexity because Lowell has transformed him into an object of ridicule. Melville's Delano is a forthright, unsophisticated American whose faith in the rightness of things prevents him from recognizing the danger he is in. Lowell's Delano is deceived because he is a smug bigot distracted by his Northern envy of Benito Cereno for keeping a body slave. The audience is held at bay from this Delano, for the purpose of the play is not to enable us to share his experience, as in Melville, but to condemn him as a representative of American racism.

Like Hawthorne, Melville offers a number of paradoxes regarding the American character. Captain Delano's imperception, it is clear, symbolizes the failure of Northerners to come to grips with the presence of slavery in their nation. Yet, as Benito Cereno points out after Babo's role has been revealed and he and Delano have made their escape, the captain's innocence is what saves him. If he had betrayed a suspicion while in Babo's presence, he would have been killed. There is a dark side of American life that must be brought to consciousness, Melville seems to be saying, yet there is also much to be said for its optimism and generous naiveté.

No such duality is suggested by Lowell's captain. His open-handed provision of goods is ridiculed as a gesture of American superiority. When at one point he nearly di-

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vines the mystery of the ship, it is not by beginning to contemplate the dark side of things, but as a result of his own greed. Like the Puritans he does everything for profit, and worries about what is going on only when it seems that he may not be paid for the food that he has brought.

Typically for the 1960's, evil is here conceived not in moral but aesthetic terms. To climax his trilogy, Lowell presents in Captain Delano a figure to be despised chiefly for his vulgarity and his involvement in business. From these crimes it is but a short step to the racist murder with which the play ends.

In Melville's version Babo is captured and sent to trial in Peru, where he is put to death. On stage, once the Spanish ship has been subdued, Captain Delano stands holding a gun on Babu. Unnecessarily, he kills him. Then he empties the remaining five shells from his very loud gun into Babu's body. Endecott's prophetic dream of slaughter has been realized, and the curtain falls.

THE Hawthorne and Melville tales selected by Lowell have for some time been recognized *loci* of modern literary criticism. By 1964, when he adapted them, they were well-known as "Kafkaesque," 19th-century predecessors of the literature of the absurd. It is remarkable, therefore, that Lowell, rather than building on the proto-modernist subtleties of his sources, chose to flatten them out. It would seem that at its very moment of triumph, the modernist ideal of complexity was being abandoned by a leading modern poet. And others quickly followed Lowell in announcing their own conversions in the 1960's: from fiction to nonfiction, from abstraction to representational pop art, and from criticism to a position "against interpretation."

One of the symbols used by Lowell is that of the flag as an expression of national character. In the first play the British flag is cut from its standard, in the second the boy is asked to choose between the Union Jack and the banner, "Don't Tread on Me," and in the third the Spanish flag of "freedom" is used as a barber's smock. Significantly, Lowell's Endecott tears down the British flag as a simple gesture of revolt where Hawthorne's Endicott performs a more complex symbolic act, cutting out from the flag only the British red cross, associated in his mind with Papacy. Hawthorne is suggesting that the American Revolution which this act presages was touched by religious bigotry—yet another complication of the sort that Lowell chooses to abandon.

There was much desecration of flags in this country after Lowell's trilogy was first produced. He cannot of course be held responsible for those coincidentally primitive attacks on symbols of the state. Yet one cannot help thinking in retrospect that *The Old Glory* marked the beginning of a willful return to art as agit-prop—and the beginning of a period that Richard Hofstadter was to call an age of rubbish.

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Books in Review

Founding Fathers

THE ORIGINS OF ZIONISM. By DAVID VITAL. *Oxford. 396 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by AMOS ELON

IN MODERN Jewish history, the year 1881 is the great divide. The publication in Germany in the fall of that year of Eugen Duehring's *Die Judenfrage als Racen Sitten und Kulturfrage* heralded a new age of "scientific" racism, which in that country would reach its culmination in the death factories of Auschwitz and Treblinka. In Russia, the last hopes of liberal reform were dashed by the assassination in 1881 of the so-called Czar Liberator, Alexander II. More than one-half of the world's Jews lived in Russia, herded into the Pale of Settlement, officially classed as "aliens" (*inorodsty,* those of another race) and subjected to severe repressive measures. Police-instigated pogroms swept the Ukraine in the spring of 1881, inaugurating the first great wave of the Jewish exodus from Europe.

It was in the history of modern Jewish *thought,* however, that 1881 had the most fateful consequences of all. That year marked the birth of Zionism, which established the Jews as a political nation.

Zionism owed more to the secular European milieu in the age of liberal nationalism than to the eschatological aspiration among Jews for a messianic End of Days. True, the movement derived some of its tenets from religious notions of redemption and return, but basically it was a *risorgimento* for Jews, conceived in the light of and after the national awakening of other European peoples—the Poles, Greeks, Czechs, Serbs, Letts, Finns, and Ukrainians. But more so than other national-liberation movements, Zionism was almost inextricably embedded in the tradition of liberal humanism. Its foundations were rational rather than romantic. Unlike other nationalisms it was based more on necessity than mystique. It was inspired by concrete and specific needs—chief among them the preservation of life—rather than by abstract notions of right. The fathers of Zionist thought were not interested in a national home for its own sake, not in sovereignty for the sake of sovereignty; rather, they believed that there would be no physical safety for Jews except within a country of their own.

The rational features of early Zionism clearly emerge from this new book, which traces the ideology and the embyronic movement that emerged from the events of 1881. One wishes there were more histories of this kind, for, although almost a century has passed since 1881, Zionism is probably the only national-liberation movement of the past one-hundred-fifty years that is still largely controversial, not merely in its present-day practice, but in theory as well. This is a strange and melancholy fact to ponder, especially in the aftermath of the UN General Assembly resolution that Zionism is a form of racism, but also because of apparent changes in public opinion generally on this question. People are notoriously lenient with success and harsh with failure. Zionism, which set out to "normalize" the Jewish condition and to establish a "safe" haven, cannot now be considered a "success" by any so-called normal standards. Perhaps even the opposite is true. In Israel the former pariah people live in a pariah state, paradoxically perhaps the only place left where Jews are in mortal danger precisely because they are Jews.

Such paradoxes are in one's mind constantly as one reads David Vital's book. Vital constructs his account of early Zionism on the basis of contemporary evidence, and he tends to see the men who were involved as they saw themselves, rather than how we in hindsight may choose to see them. Inevitably, therefore, his account of the Zionist dream is overcast by a certain air of tragedy. His book is a solid work and a welcome addition to the literature on Zionism, which, although immense, has been mostly polemical. Vital is best read as a sequel to Walter Laqueur's seminal *History of Zionism* (1972). Laqueur's book is more sweeping (at the price of detail) and better written, and brings the story up to the year 1948; Vital's *The Origins of Zionism* delineates only the crucial formative years between 1881 and the first Zionist Congress of 1897. And in constrast to Laqueur, who is best at describing events in Central and Western Europe, Vital concentrates on Eastern Europe, Lenin's great "prison of peoples" from which the Jews, like so many others, were trying to break out.

The Zionists were at all times a minority within the Jewish community, and Vital describes this minority well—its twin roots in socialism and *Yiddishkeit*; its enormous handicap as a semi-clandestine movement in Czarist Russia; the terrible in-fighting among rival factions that is today almost impossible to comprehend; the perennial shortage of funds; the lack of leadership. Nonetheless, the embryonic movement succeeded in creating a bridgehead in Palestine as early as 1882, a bridgehead that was eventually to become the basis of an independent state.

Vital draws extensively on relevant Hebrew, Russian, Yiddish, and German source material to etch his portrait of the Jewish crisis in Eastern Europe. The material from which he draws is still to some degree untapped, and it is an extraordinarily rich source. Zionism was a highly self-conscious movement—its leading figures were inveterate diarists who, from the first moment, saw themselves as participants in the making of history. Thus, Levontin, the founder of Rishon le-Zion, the first Zionist colony, wrote his memoirs in 1883, less than a year after its establishment. Herzl's diaries are especially detailed and personally revealing in their candor. Most public men are complex, but few have had the courage to leave behind so rich a record of

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AMOS ELON, *the noted Israeli journalist, is the author of* The Israelis: Founders and Sons *and the biography* Herzl.

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personal neurosis as Herzl, and in such a brilliant and lucid style.

FOUR personalities dominate Vital's book: the Odessa positivist Moshe Leib Lilienblum; the civilized elderly physician Leon Pinsker; Theodor Herzl, who came to Zionism from the outside, like Moses to the enslaved children of Israel; and, in a category all by himself, Ahad Ha'am, the acerbic critic from within.

There were vast differences among the four men—in background, in outlook, and in capability. What they had in common was their rejection of both immobilism and universalism. For their safety, for their future, all four agreed, Jews could rely neither on God nor on the Gentiles, but on what they themselves were prepared to do. Only those who were ready to help themselves could be helped. Another quality at least the first three had in common was an extreme Eurocentricity. To a European in the last quarter of the 19th century all that lay outside the confines of Europe seemed a political vacuum. Lilienblum, Pinsker, and Herzl overlooked the political potential of the Arab population of Palestine. By the same token all four, including Ahad Ha'am, obsessed as they were with the problems and sufferings of European Jews, never even contemplated the possibility that the Jewish state might eventually become a haven for oppressed Jews from the Afro-Asian countries as well.

"In Moshe Lilienblum," Vital notes, "life and letters combined to produce what is beyond doubt the most vivid and instructive epitome of the social and moral crisis of Russian-Polish Jewry in the latter half of the 19th century." Lilienblum was a fallen talmudist who in the 1870's had come under the influence of the Russian positivists Pizarev and Chernishevsky. Having lost all religious faith, he moved to Odessa, the mecca of Russian modernism, and (at the age of thirty-eight!) was attending a *gymnasium* in order to acquire a secular Russian education when, on May 6, 1881, a pogrom broke out. Lilienblum hid in the cellar of his barred-up house while outside in the streets the howling rioters milled in the rubble and debris. At that moment he underwent the remarkable intellectual transformation that was to make him into one of the fathers of modern Zionism, the man who would inspire the first pioneers to embark in 1882 for Palestine.

Lilienblum was shocked not so much by the pogrom itself as by the fact that "cultured" Russians participated in it: university students, seminarists, and supporters of the populist *Narodnaya Volya* movement. He concluded it was not lack of Jewish participation in Russian culture that had caused the tragedy but the fact that Jews—assimilated or not—remained strangers. During the pogrom Lilienblum had seen a drunken Russian woman dancing deliriously in the street. Her companions were putting Jewish homes to the torch, and he heard the woman cry, "It's our country!"

"Can *we* say that?" Lilienblum asked himself. His answer was, "No." Jews were strangers not only in Russia but everywhere in the Diaspora. Hence, they must prepare to evacuate Europe and reassemble under their own flag in their own country. The exodus might take a century, but a beginning had to be made. And they must begin their return to the ancient land of Israel, not to America where they would again be strangers. The land of Israel was theirs by historic right, and there they would be at home and safe.

NO LESS significant was the reaction to the same pogrom of Leon Pinsker. He was sixty years old at the time, a distinguished, well-to-do physician in Odessa, a thoroughly assimilated man who had been decorated by the Czar for service in the Crimean war. For Pinsker too the pogroms of 1881 marked a turning point. He too was shocked by the participation of "cultured" elements. He resigned from the Society for the Promotion of [Russian] Culture Among Jews. What was the use of cultural assimilation when, it was clear, the non-Jewish majority would never permit it? Anti-Semitism was a disease; its

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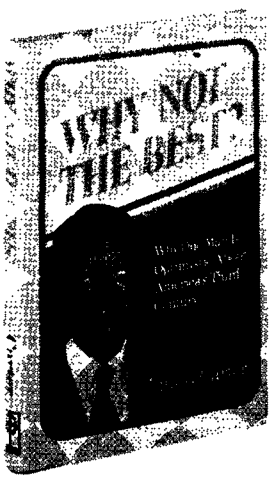

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only cure was to put an end to the perennial homelessness of the Jew.

Out of this recognition grew a pamphlet, *Autoemancipation—A Warning to his Kinfolk by a Russian Jew,* that became a milestone in the development of Zionist thought. A homeless people, Pinsker argued, was like a man without a shadow, an ogre, a fearful phantom. "Thus, to the living, the Jew is a corpse; to the native-born, a foreigner; to the long-settled, a vagabond; to the rich, a beggar; to the poor, an exploiter and a millionaire; to the patriot, a man without a country; to all classes—a hated rival." The only solution was a collective one: the recreation of full Jewish nationality on its own territory. Pinsker did not propose a *return.* It was not necessarily the Holy Land that the Jews needed, but *a* land. Only in later years did his disciples convert him to the cause of Palestine and Palestine only.

His pamphlet was published anonymously in German, in Berlin, possibly because he was aware it might never pass the Russian censor. A more important reason was probably this: while the main problem was in the East, the political initiative to save the Jews, as Pinsker saw it, had to come from the enlightened Jews of the West, who were at least free to act. At first Pinsker's appeal was not heeded, but that he was correct in his assessment became dramatically evident fifteen years later when a new man arose on the scene: Theodor Herzl, a charismatic, Moses-like figure, a Jew so secure in his Viennese milieu that for him Zionism clearly answered no immediate personal need but was rather a noble historical cause to be pursued for moral reasons. Herzl's very appearance on the Zionist scene changed it almost overnight into a serious international political movement.

The simple message of Herzl's pamphlet, *Der Judenstaat*—"We are a people, *one* people"—while dismissed by the Jews of the West, in the East fell like a torch on dry straw. Vital's chapters on Herzl are the best in the book. Herzl comes across as a mixture of genius and gambler, a man capable of confronting "his" problem as a Jew and making it the starting point for an extraordinary essay of historic proportions. During his lifetime he was derided as a madman, a political Jules Verne, a would-be King of the Beggars. His achievement took immense courage and tenacity and equally immense powers of self-transcendence.

Herzl was the only "hero" the Zionists had, and they clung to him even when they disagreed. "He had a hero's flaws," Vital observes succinctly, "some so deep and plain to see that, on inspection, it becomes hard to understand the sources of his evident power for action . . . [yet] Herzl's achievement was immense and unique. Zionism as a true political movement and as an international force—however weak and uncertain—is to all intents and purposes his invention and his creation."

VITAL's comprehensive accounts of Herzl, Pinsker, and Lilienblum are well complemented by his treatment of Ahad Ha'am, the Hebrew essayist and critic whose preoccupation with the cultural and spiritual legacy of Judaism insured that Zionism would be more than a movement of political liberation alone. In all, Vital has made fair use of the rich documentation at his disposal; his judicious choice of issues and personalities, and his skillful alternations between straightforward narrative and the discussion of ideas make for an interesting portrait of one of the most extraordinary revolutions of modern times.

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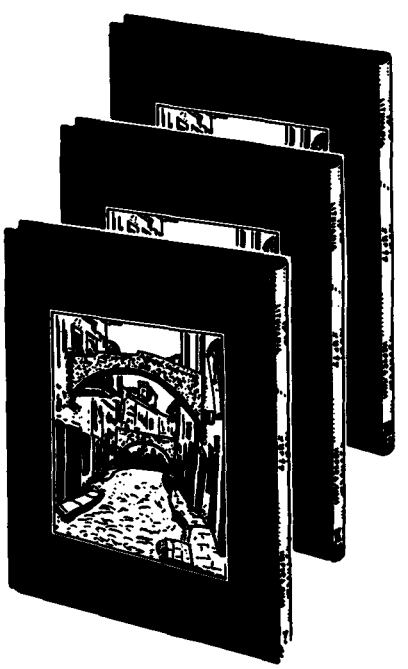

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Comes the Revolution . . .

SCHOOLING IN CAPITALIST AMERICA. By SAMUEL BOWLES and HERBERT GINTIS. *Basic Books. 340 pp. $13.95.*

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

LIBERAL critiques of American education typically stress either the inequalities or the brutalities of schooling. Educational in-

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equality comes in many varieties, but it usually boils down to the idea that some people do not get as much education, or as good an education, as other people, and that systemic forces rather than individual choice account for this uneven access to the pleasures and benefits of schooling. The brutalitarian analysis, by contrast, asserts that under current conditions the more formal education one gets the worse off one is likely to be, for schools impede individuality, destroy curiosity and creativity, and generally repress youngsters in authoritarian ways. Occasionally both themes get linked, as in the charge that the schools attended by the poor are rigid, harsh, and demeaning while those patronized by the prosperous are flexible, nurturing, and pleasant.

Most educational-reform efforts of recent years have sought to respond to one or both of these criticisms. Compensatory programs in the elementary schools, open enrollment in the colleges, the campaign to level school spending across district lines, new federal scholarship schemes, and, of course, the desegregation movement may fairly be viewed as attempts to curb inequality. Alternative schools, learner-centered instruction, open classrooms, student participation, and most curriculum reforms exemplify the quest for less punishing educational arrangements.

Schooling in Capitalist America argues that such reform efforts over the past century have failed to make education significantly more equal or less brutal. Despite the heroic attempts of progressive pedagogues, "schools, by and large, remain hostile to the individual's need for personal development," and notwithstanding the well-intentioned schemes of liberal social policy, the schools have also not succeeded in equalizing "economic status or opportunity."

The evidence cited and allegations repeated by the authors are familiar enough.

On inequality: children from upper-class families typically receive more years of formal schooling than youngsters from less favored circumstances. The wealthy are more likely to attend college.

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Background counts for more than aptitude. The schools lack the power to correct large inequities of income and status or to overcome the effects of birth and family.

On brutality: successful students display diligence and popularity but not creativity or mental agility, for the educational system does not value or reward the latter traits. Instead, schools breed conformity and docility. Progressivism never had a chance before it was swamped by the requirements of scientific management. Frederick Taylor had a greater impact than John Dewey.

Having established these failures —at least, leveled these charges—a conventional reform treatise would go on to cite promising innovations, to suggest alternate ways of organizing schools and teaching children, or to urge such non-educational measures as a guaranteed income or better community mental-health services. But Bowles and Gintis head in a different direction. To the "egalitarian" and "developmental" tasks of education, they add a third, the "integrative," a fancy phrase for what educators usually call "socialization": the view that along with needed skills and credentials the schools imbue children with the norms and mores of the society in which they will live. To Bowles and Gintis, the problem with the "integrative function" is not that the schools have failed at it but that they have succeeded.

If one starts from the premise that American society is evil, the institutions that transmit its features from one generation to the next will hold little appeal. If one views the economy as the pawn of a handful of robber barons who also control the schools and use them to mold docile workers for the wage-slavery of hierarchical factories, then education is an uncertain blessing. And if one believes that the agenda of liberal educators is inherently contradictory, and that so long as "the interests of profitability and stability" dominate the schools, true equality and personal development will inevitably be squeezed out by the demands of the "integrative function," one is likely to find ordinary reform schemes futile or worse.

For Bowles and Gintis, it all comes back to capitalism. "Repression, individual powerlessness, inequality of incomes, and inequality of opportunity did not originate historically in the educational system, nor do they derive from unequal and repressive schools today. The roots of repression and inequality lie in the structure and functioning of the capitalist economy." Anyone who seeks school reform must first agree to a revolution.

That much we glean from the initial fifty pages. Nine chapters remain before the call to arms is sounded. (Yes, "It is almost inconceivable that a socialist revolution in the United States would not involve violence at some stage.") For the most part, the authors amass numbers, historical events, and analysis to support their conclusions. After a long disquisition on the nature of the capitalist economy, a caricature drawn straight from the 19th century and bearing scant resemblance to the United States in 1976, we get an exegesis of inequality ("inequality under capitalism is rooted not in individual deficiencies, but in the structure of production and property relations"), and a discussion of the way in which the classroom mimics the dehumanizing structural relations of the workplace. That this has always been so under American capitalism is the burden of four full chapters, concluding that "educational change has historically played the role not of a complement to economic reform but as a substitute for it."

In recent years, free schools, alternative schools, locally-controlled schools, open classrooms, and other innovative schemes have spread and, to Bowles and Gintis, these are desirable as far as they go. But no such amelioration "is capable of addressing the major problems facing U.S. society today," because "the open conflict between the objectives of corporate employers and other privileged elites . . . and the needs of just about everyone else" has produced a deadlock. The goals of liberal educational reform will

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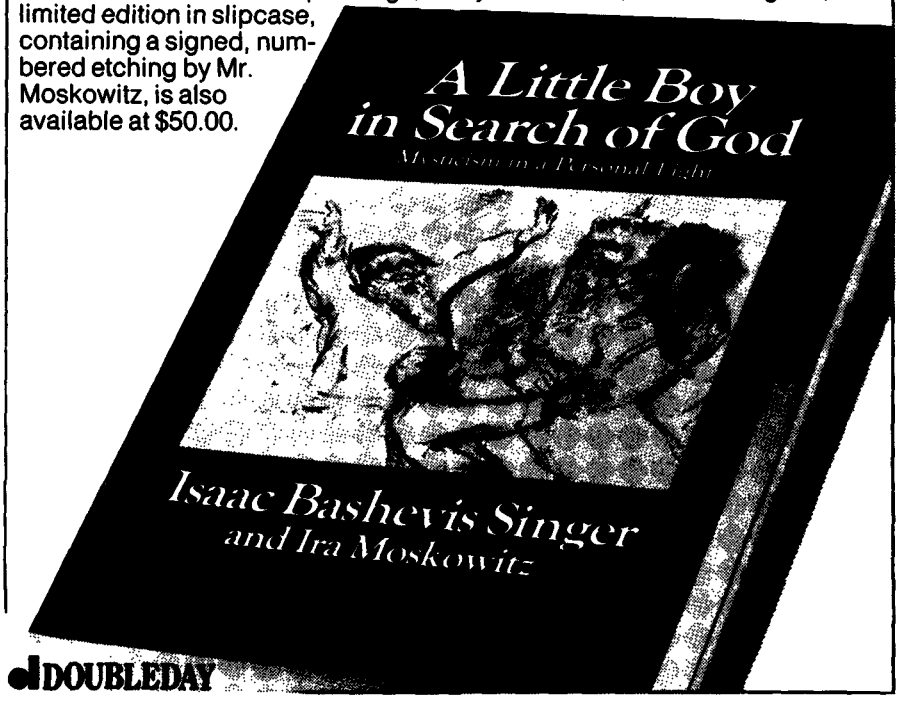

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be stymied until the contradictions of modern capitalist society first get resolved.

THOSE who enjoy reading such things will derive much pleasure from this volume, for it is a nearly perfect example of its genre. No inequalities can be set right unless all are. Identify a social good about which there is widespread agreement that its current allocation and quality could be improved. Find a worthy and deserving group—children will do—that can be described as victimized by its present deployment. Demonstrate that the condition of this social good is intimately bound up with the economic and political arrangements of the nation, then press inexorably on to the conclusion that only by changing those arrangements in fundamental ways can the particular problem be solved. Never mind that the chances of enacting feasible and—to the liberal—desirable reforms are damaged by such analyses. Those who would settle for such changes are themselves part of the problem, their tinkering an impediment to the revolution.

Written by two professors at a respectable university, subsidized by our largest and most eminent private foundation, and brought out by a serious and generally sensible publisher, *Schooling in Capitalist America* will command a measure of respectful attention. My chief regret, other than the trees, is that it masquerades as a book on educational reform instead of flying its true colors.

Confusion of Realms

CHILDREN OF THE SUN: A NARRATIVE OF "DECADENCE" IN ENGLAND AFTER 1918. BY MARTIN GREEN. *Basic Books. 470 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ALTER

THIS study of the Bright Young People who came to prominence in British intellectual life in the years after World War I is

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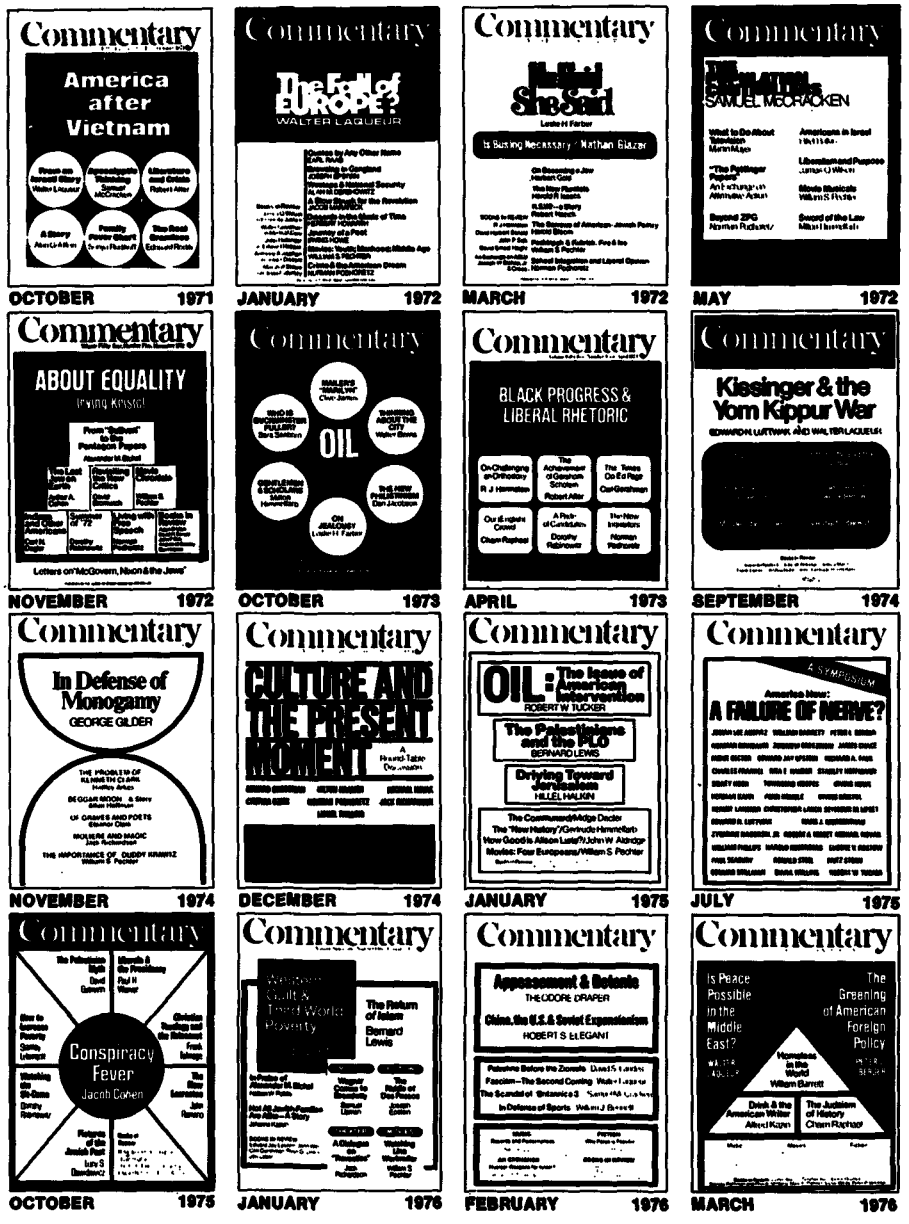

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curiously divided against itself. In the autobiographical "Confessions and Conclusions" at the end of the book, Martin Green presents himself as still vaguely loyal to the sturdy moralism of F. R. Leavis and the Cambridge critics with whom he first studied, but now tempered by age and, after the epidemic Dionysianism of the 60's, feeling a need to be in touch with the more flamboyant and frivolous varieties of imagination that have been anathema to Leavis and his followers. The author's candor about his own ambivalence is admirable, but it in no way guarantees him against a blurring confusion of attitudes in the presentation of his material.

The valuable achievement of *Children of the Sun* is to provide a minutely informed, perceptive history of a revolution in taste and sensibility, while most of the book's problems stem, I think, from its tendency to regard shifts in taste and dialectical movements of cultural creativity as interchangeable terms. Green follows the rise, step by step, of a dandy-aesthete posture among British literary people through the 20's and 30's till its eventual decline in the dozen years after World War II. The leading emphases of this posture—homosexuality, ostentatious attire, high camp, aggressive snobbery, orgiastic promiscuity, a love of fantasy, militant aestheticism, the avoidance of seriousness, the cultivation of permanent adolescence as an ideal—are plausibly seen as a rebellion against the solid public values of the Victorian and Edwardian fathers who spawned (the word seems appropriate) this first 20th-century literary generation.

The large canvas of figures dealt with, all of them born in the first twelve years of the century, includes Evelyn Waugh, Cyril Connolly, Cecil Beaton, Peter Quenell, Alan Pryce-Jones, John Betjeman, Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden, Randolph Churchill, Nancy Mitford, and, the two protagonists of the narrative, Brian Howard and Harold Acton. It is clear that of the list only Auden could lay claim to something like a substantial imaginative achievement, and even that claim, Green suggests (in my view, sensibly), is hard to sustain when Auden's work is compared with that of the major modernist poets. At the beginning of his final chapter, Green raises the very question which is likely to trouble many readers through all these pages: "Why investigate all that in so much detail? I haven't, after all, been finding out that the dandies were a much *larger* phenomenon than I used to think them, intellectually or imaginatively. Have I done anything more than merely understand how Englishmen could then want to be dandies?" There is, I'm afraid, no satisfactory answer, either in the body of the book or in its introspective conclusion, to the author's own question. Perhaps as readers we have been invited to want more than he can deliver because he has led us to expect deep significances

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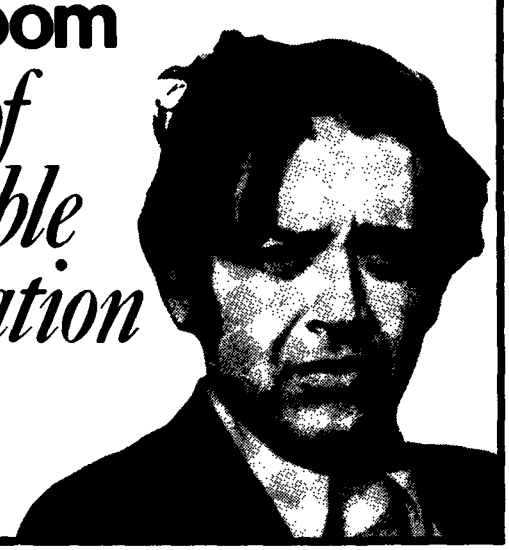

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which the subject itself cannot yield.

GREEN is at his best when he is most purely descriptive. The narrative sprawls over so many personages that it sometimes seems repetitious or diffuse, but the evocation of a generation's manners and mannerisms, with all their contexts and antecedents, is consistently fine. Green provides a wonderful contrast between the Victorian imperial ritual of cricket and the new aesthetes' cult of ballet. He is astute in showing how the *commedia dell'arte* provided both an aesthetic model and a fixed repertory of roles to play. He has interesting things to say on the new fashions in clothing and the new use of cosmetics in the 20's and how they relate to the dandy conceptions of art. "Life-style," that great blight on contemporary English, is a term used here frequently and justifiably, for it is just that—not imaginative life or a way of life—which is the real subject of the book.

For this reason, the rather odd choice of Brian Howard and Harold Acton as the two major figures of the narrative makes perfect sense. Waugh and Auden produced far more that was worth reading, but Acton and especially Howard are exemplary precisely in their relative sterility. From their days at Eton and Oxford, they were above all the leaders of a new "life-style," executing a series of cultural gestures—the founding of an ephemeral journal, the precocious publication of slender verse and fiction, the management of extravagant parties—with such panache that they succeeded in imposing themselves on their contemporaries as brilliantly promising writers. One comes away from this whole account with a new understanding of the edge of fierceness in the campaign on behalf of moral seriousness and "maturity" waged by the Leavisites in *Scrutiny* against both Bloomsbury (dealt with only obliquely by Green) and the dandies.

Unfortunately, Green insists on buttressing his chronicle of a "life-style" with terms that suggest a ponderous importance transcending gesture and taste. He is possessed by a rage of taxonomy, constantly dividing the figures he discusses into dandy-aesthetes, naifs, rogue-rebels, hearties, fathers, uncles, and generating through such classifications a numbing rhythm of reiteration rather than a real illumination of the individual figures. Mythological models abound in similar fashion. The result is to give the misleading impression of an inexorable pattern in general cultural history where a momentary constellation in the evolution of English sensibility is being described. The conceptual armature of the book and its title are drawn from the 19th-century Swiss anthropologist J. J. Bachofen, who saw a universal pattern of cultural diffusion by migration in which the new king-gods from abroad are viewed by the natives as creatures "from the sky," a perception the self-aware new ruling elite encourages by proclaiming its members Children of the Sun. Green makes it clear that he is using Bachofen's idea only in a broad metaphorical sense, but of course any metaphor carries with it the associations of the realm from which it is drawn, and it is surely a little preposterous to think of figures like Acton and Howard even metaphorically as culture-bearing Children of the Sun for the simple reason that the only culture they had to diffuse was derivative manner, empty gesture, sterile rebellious stance.

Pursuing this will-o'-the-wisp of a universal cultural pattern, Green veers noticeably off target whenever he tries to extend his argument from the English dandies to serious literary creativity. Thus, to explain England's insignificant role in the great flowering of modernism in the 20's, he proposes that this "whole generation of English writers . . . preferred the purely playful dandyism of English aristocrats to the dangerously experimental dandyism of international aestheticism." The assertion may be accurate for the English writers, but "dangerously experimental dandyism" and "aestheticism" are a woefully inadequate characterization of the modernist enterprise. It works, more or less, for Proust (a cult figure among the English Deca-

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dents), but it makes skewed sense, or no sense at all, for Joyce, Yeats, Broch, Mann, Biely, Gide, Faulkner, Stevens. Elsewhere, mesmerized by his scheme of Victorian fathers and their rebellious sons, Green actually describes Conrad's *Nostromo* as "the fullest celebration of the pre-1914 Englishman in fiction," when it is excruciatingly obvious that Conrad is ruthlessly exposing the yawning emptiness of the traditional Englishman and his colonialist code of manly action, embodied in the novel in Charles Gould.

FINALLY, the warp resulting from the confusion of sensibility and creativity is most visible in the treatment of the writer who turns out, somewhat peculiarly, to be the secret hero of this book—Vladimir Nabokov. Nabokov was a student at Cambridge in the early 20's. As a very young man he cultivated certain dandiacal mannerisms (which he retrospectively mocks in *Speak, Memory*), and in his adolescence he was an eager reader of the arch-aesthete Diaghilev's *World of Art* (as almost any alert young literary intellectual in Russia would have been at the time). Green's effort, however, to see Nabokov as a 20's-style British dandy and to convert Nabokov's vigorously public-minded parliamentarian father into a Russian dandy is utterly unconvincing. Nabokov, in the book's peroration, is said to "hold the key to the locked door of England's dungeon" because he is, as Green contends elsewhere in the book, "a dandy and an aesthete who transcended dandyism and aestheticism," managing to write novels that "are cultic celebrations of the dandy and aesthete but at the same time serious works of art." I share the admiration for Nabokov, but I must confess that I can't imagine where one can detect these cultic celebrations of the dandy and the aesthete in any of his mature novels. Nabokov does, of course, continually affirm the shaping power of consciousness and art, and the structure and texture of his novels are elaborately wrought in consonance with that idea; but to see this as a cultic celebration of dandy values is to misread the novels by con-

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fusing a concept of "life-style" with a mode of cognition, imagining that self-conscious art always means aestheticism.

The confusion of realms is, I would guess, a reflection of Martin Green's desire to find some bridge between the trivial and the significant and thus justify his deep involvement in a subject which, by the light of his Leavisite education, would be deemed intellectually unworthy. In his conclusion, he repeatedly claims that the understanding of the dandy-aesthete is now crucial for "criticism," but it is precisely the lack of any real critical perspective that is the major limitation of his book.

The End

CURTAIN. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Dodd, Mead. 238 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

IT was a glorious moment in Conan Doyle's *The Final Problem* when Sherlock Holmes and the arch-villain Moriarity tumbled to their deaths at Reichenbach Falls, their bodies locked together in a wrestling embrace. It had all the elements of an inevitable end, the great detective concluding his life work by destroying his own mirror image, the brilliant "Napoleon of Crime," the "spider" at the center of a web of darkness.

The death of Hercule Poirot in Agatha Christie's *Curtain* has similar elements. Like Holmes, Poirot is facing the arch-antagonist of his career, a villain who sits at the center of a web of seemingly unconnected murders, who will strike again, but who cannot be caught because there is no proof of crime. Like Holmes, Poirot faces a criminal whose powers are a twisted version of his own: Holmes's rationality was perverted into the evil genius of Moriarty, Poirot's supposed psychological acumen is tested by a killer of the "psychological" kind. And like Holmes too, Poirot goes down with his enemy, leaving behind a letter that will explain the final events to a bewildered assistant.

But here the similarities end. Poirot's death is much less dramatic. The aged, arthritic Belgian detective and his older but no wiser Watson, Captain Hastings, return to Styles, the country estate of Christie's first book which introduced the pair fifty-six years ago. The old manor has changed, along with Poirot and the old upper-class ways, and has been broken up now to form a *pension* rented out to vacationers. The setting can hardly match Switzerland's rapids, Poirot is but a dim reflection of Holmes, and his antagonist is nowhere near so terrifying as the evil professor. For all the earnest straining after legend here, it does not quite work.

Dame Agatha planned her murder of Poirot about thirty years ago along with that of Miss Marple, her other eccentric sleuth. With that same self-conscious sense of drama that marked her fiction, she stored the record of these intentions in a London vault with the proviso that they be executed after her death. At some point, however, Christie changed her plans and released Poirot's last case—just five months before she died. (Miss Marple's is still to come.) According to her publisher it was the enormous financial success of the movie version of *Murder on the Orient Express* that changed the author's mind, but it is also possible that she had planned the early release all along as a final triumph, returning for one last time as it were to the scene of her crime.

Whatever her motives, *Curtain* is not a triumph. Though written many years ago, it is already permeated by that weariness and solemnity which would become more evident in Christie's works as she grew older. One of her earlier virtues was a refusal to take herself too seriously. She enjoyed the game —laying out the false clues, the countless motives, the innumerable threads of coincidence and threats of murder, in a seemingly hopeless tangle, wasting no time on unnecessary description or character development except as these might serve as clues for the detective or red herrings for the reader. These

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN *contributed "Bach in the Original" to our May number.*

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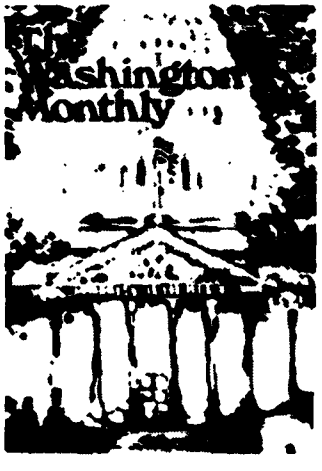

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early books claim no motive other than entertainment—some even had "Casts of Characters" in front which read like advertisements for the movies they might go on to become: "Sir Carmichael Clarke: The eminent collector of Chinese art. He had an unfortunate habit of taking solitary walks." Or, "Major Blunt: A courageous cool-headed big-game hunter, he felt ill at ease in a world that wouldn't let a man solve his problems with a gun." But *Curtain*, though written at a time when Christie could still turn out an engaging story, has little of this lightness and playfulness. Already there are hints of that bombastic and moralizing side of Agatha Christie—the one given to railing at the "younger generation" and such things—which would become more and more apparent as she aged.

In *Curtain* there is little respite from Christie's earnestness and "insights"; the book is all but buried under them. Worst of all, the puzzle and its solution—usually the centerpiece of Christie's mysteries and the part she executed best—simply do not come off. Her most memorable books, *The ABC Murders, Murder on the Orient Express, The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, And Then There Were None*, are memorable chiefly for that final unraveling when, most often, the suspects are gathered together to witness the unveiling of the murderer. The reader too witnesses an almost magical transformation of the events of the book through a paradigmatic act of understanding. But in *Curtain* this transformation fails to occur because the design of the book violates the rules of the genre. For one thing, the puzzle itself is a fraud, involving as it does a partial deception by Poirot of both Hastings and the reader. Secondly, the criminal's methods are absurd, even in the permissive context of mystery fiction. Thirdly, and most important, the criminal acts themselves are performed out of motives which are irrational and hence inaccessible to the reader. In mystery stories the introduction of unpredictable, irrational elements is inexcusable—one cannot play chess when one's opponent overturns the board.

But if *Curtain* itself is a failure, it still leaves open the question of Agatha Christie's enormous popular success. It is not equal to the success of Sherlock Holmes, to be sure, whose fans contemplate the works of Conan Doyle as though they comprised a Third Testament, and turn out volumes and volumes of midrash upon even the least of them. Probably Poirot will never reach this cultic level because he and his cases, in their bland lack of detail, simply cannot muster the mythic appeal of Holmes and his heroic struggles against the irrational—the dark streets of London, a speckled poisonous snake slithering through a ventilator, an engineer's thumb cut off and left hanging on a windowsill. It was an irrationality he carried in himself as well with a demonic manic intensity. But where Holmes had his violin, the bullet holes in his walls, his strange work habits, and his addictions, Poirot has only his "little gray cells," his dandified moustaches, his conceit, his French phrases, his passion for symmetry and hot chocolate. Poirot, unlike Holmes, has few shadows. He is mild, innocuous in his addictions, and his taste in crimes is a bit too domestic to warrant comparison with the sleuth of Baker Street. Nevertheless, Agatha Christie's eighty-six books, including the forty that star Poirot, have sold over 400 million copies, been translated into more than 100 languages, and show no signs of waning in popularity. What then is their drawing power?

At first it seems that the core of these books is just the puzzle: how was the victim murdered in a room that locks from the inside? Who could have put strychnine in the teacup? Which of the alibis is false? In the solution to these questions there is the sheer mathematical elation of a problem being solved, and also the appeal of the magician pulling motives and murderers out of a hat. But these are only partial explanations. Why this particular murder? Why these particular character types—the servants, retired colonels, rich old aunts, and bitter nephews who go to make up a quintessential Christie novel? The appeal of these

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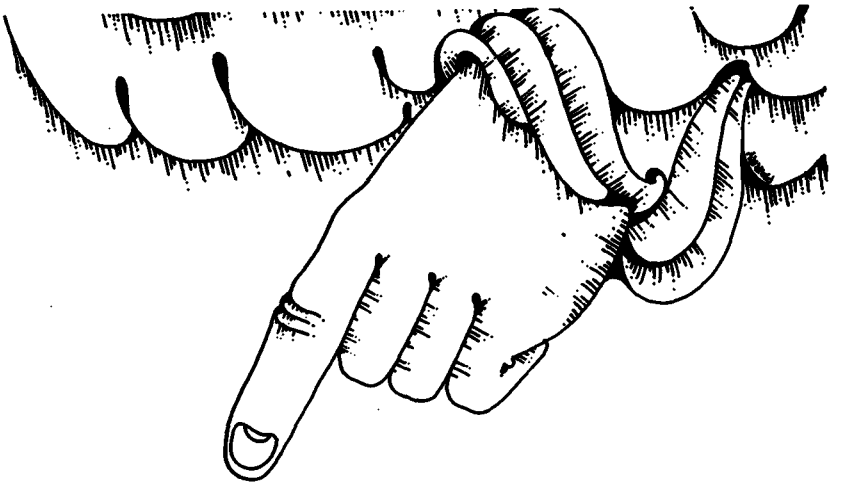
stories involves more than the satisfaction of solving a puzzle and more even than the pleasure of watching justice triumph.

Christie's crimes have a curious regularity to them. A lower-class man marries wealth and then kills in order to obtain the money. A daughter in poor financial straits murders an elderly relative so as to secure a "rich contented life in England with her children." A doctor kills to preserve his happiness and position, after having used blackmail to sustain it. A wealthy woman kills to cover an unseeemly past. These, then, are "class" murders, crimes which arise out of demanding another's place and not knowing one's own, or out of a desire to preserve an illusion hitherto sustained by deceit. The setting and the characters are usually British and sufficiently affluent to warrant the presence of a "butler." Poirot, on the other hand, is an outsider to the system, and thus in a perfect position to rectify the misdeeds of the criminal—another outsider, but one who is disguised. The denouement of these stories always involves the restoration of order, the return of things and people to their proper places in the hierarchy via a ritual exorcising of the disguised criminal.

BEYOND the comforting, indeed the primal, regularity of these stories, however, there is something which also recalls the earlier, religious meaning of the word mystery: "truth that man can know by revelation alone," as Webster puts it. The unmasking of the deceiver must come as a complete surprise, as revelation; the traitor may be anyone, but he is never what he seems, and he must be subtle, crafty, and clever, a diabolical opponent. The detective for his part has the conviction of the prophet doing God's will on earth. As the criminal works from below, so does the detective work from above; he sees through the masks of men's souls and finds the one among them who is dissembling virtue. With the purging of the criminal from the community, the random collection of former suspects is bound together for a moment and transfigured into a so-



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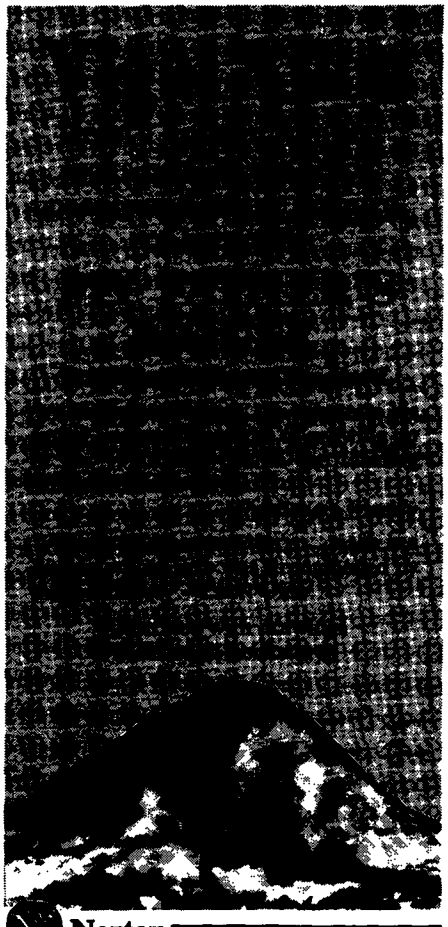

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ciety bearing witness to revealed truth. Like the religious rites of ancient times, the solution of the mystery imparts "enduring bliss to the initiate." Poirot departs, leaving behind a better world; the victim, having played his necessary part in the drama, is all but forgotten.

Stretching a point perhaps, one could say that the skeleton of Christie's plots is in fact similar to that of the mystery-passion plays of the Middle Ages, with their ritualized tale of vengeance upon evil and the triumphant reversal of Christ's death.* In this similarity, perhaps, lies one reason for the persistence in the contemporary detective novel (almost alone among literary genres) of overt prejudice against Jews and other outsiders. In one of Christie's novels a Polish Jew, Dr. Blaustein, is a spy for the Germans during World War I. In another, there is witty talk of Semitic moneylenders. And examples are to be found also in the work of other British detective novelists like G.K. Chesterton and Dorothy Sayers, not to mention John Buchan and Ian Fleming, with the Jew frequently disguised as a "Levantine."

Curtain attempts to universalize the myth of the dark outsider by moving the criminal into every individual and thereby, so to speak, internalizing the Levantine. But the attempt is simply beyond the author's reach; *Curtain* is a mere gesture, a slight wave of an arthritic hand. Still, it will serve as a finish to Poirot. His death is no great loss. "I have a bourgeois attitude toward murder," he once remarked. "I disapprove of it." But though Poirot destroyed many villains before his own demise, he did not destroy the fear of these villains—the foreigners, traitors, climbers, and imposters, hiding among us, and plotting against us. It was this fear that was at the heart of Agatha Christie's darkness, and possibly of her popularity as well.

* When the detective is also a victim, as in *Curtain* and *The Final Problem*, he himself literally becomes a Christ figure, ridding the world of its most heinous villain as he dies. For Conan Doyle the myth claimed its resolution. By popular demand the frustrated spiritualist was forced to resurrect his victim. Poirot, for obvious reasons, will not suffer a similar fate.

The Shape of History

ANATOMY AND DESTINY: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE HUMAN BODY. By STEPHEN KERN. *Bobbs-Merrill. 307 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by
ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH

STEPHEN KERN'S *Anatomy and Destiny* is a "cultural history of the human body" over the last one-hundred-fifty years. Its excursions into art, fashion, literature, philosophy, medical and psychoanalytic theory make fascinating reading. Nonetheless there is something disturbing here—an optimism that is belied by the negative aspects of culture.

According to Kern, it was the snobbishness of the Anglo-European bourgeoisie, anxious to avoid the excesses of both the aristocracy and the lower classes, that led to large restrictions and intrusions on the body throughout the 19th century. For women these included whalebone corsets and clitoridectomies which permanently disfigured the female body. For men, there were metal rings that put pressure on the penis when it expanded in the night, various alarm systems designed to wake the sleeping sex offender, and bloodletting and blistering of the penis —all viewed as cures (or punishments) for spermatorrhea, the involuntary discharge of semen. And for children of both sexes there were such devices as head-holders (*köpfhälter*) and upright-holders (*Geradehälter*) designed to mold developing young bodies into the proper posture.

Kern shows that even the most bizarre and repugnant of measures had some foundation in reality. For example, the belief that a single act of intercourse could hurt some future, as yet unconceived,

ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH, *a new contributor, teaches English at York College, CUNY, and is currently writing a book on women in literature.*

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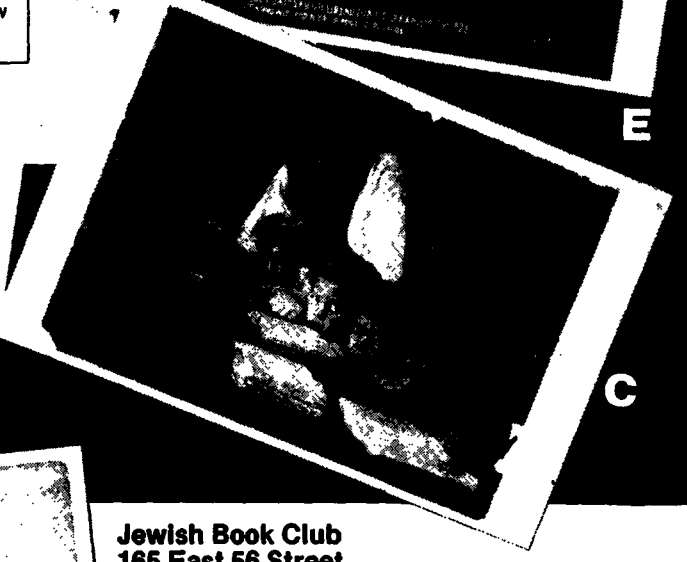

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child of another union was not altogether unrealistic, given the time lag involved in the overt manifestation of syphilis. This particular disease haunted the Victorian imagination, especially since so little was actually known about it. It was thought to be spread by kissing, for example, even kissing the Bible. Kern refers to syphilis as the "ideal Protestant disease," and an "ironically Victorian" one, for "one transgression, a single sexual contact, could lead to a lifetime of suffering."

BUT ignorance prevailed not only about the causes of disease. Reading this book, one is astonished to realize how little was known about fundamental body processes until comparatively recently. Kern points out that it was not until 1875 that the essentials of the process of fertilization were discovered. One should remember too that the mammalian egg was not clearly identified till 1827. So it should not perhaps seem so surprising that until the mid-19th century, and in many cases beyond, Victorians thought that women, like animals, were fertile during menstruation (though Aristotle had known better). Despite their pro-natalism, however, they avoided having intercourse during this period, believing that, among other unmentionable drawbacks, intercourse with a menstruating woman could produce gonorrhea. No primitive tribe sounds more ignorant than does George Napheys, a prominent 19th-century American physician, who held that intercourse during pregnancy would injure the fetus and contaminate the mother's milk. One wonders how the Victorians managed to live through all this. Maybe the answer lies in the fact that people live and marry and reproduce in spite of theory.

What Kern takes into account that has for so long been generally ignored is the social relation of the sexes and its importance for history. Along with some radical Freudian-Marxist theorists, the author sees World War I as caused at least in part by sexual repression, and also views the war as a major cure of that oppression:

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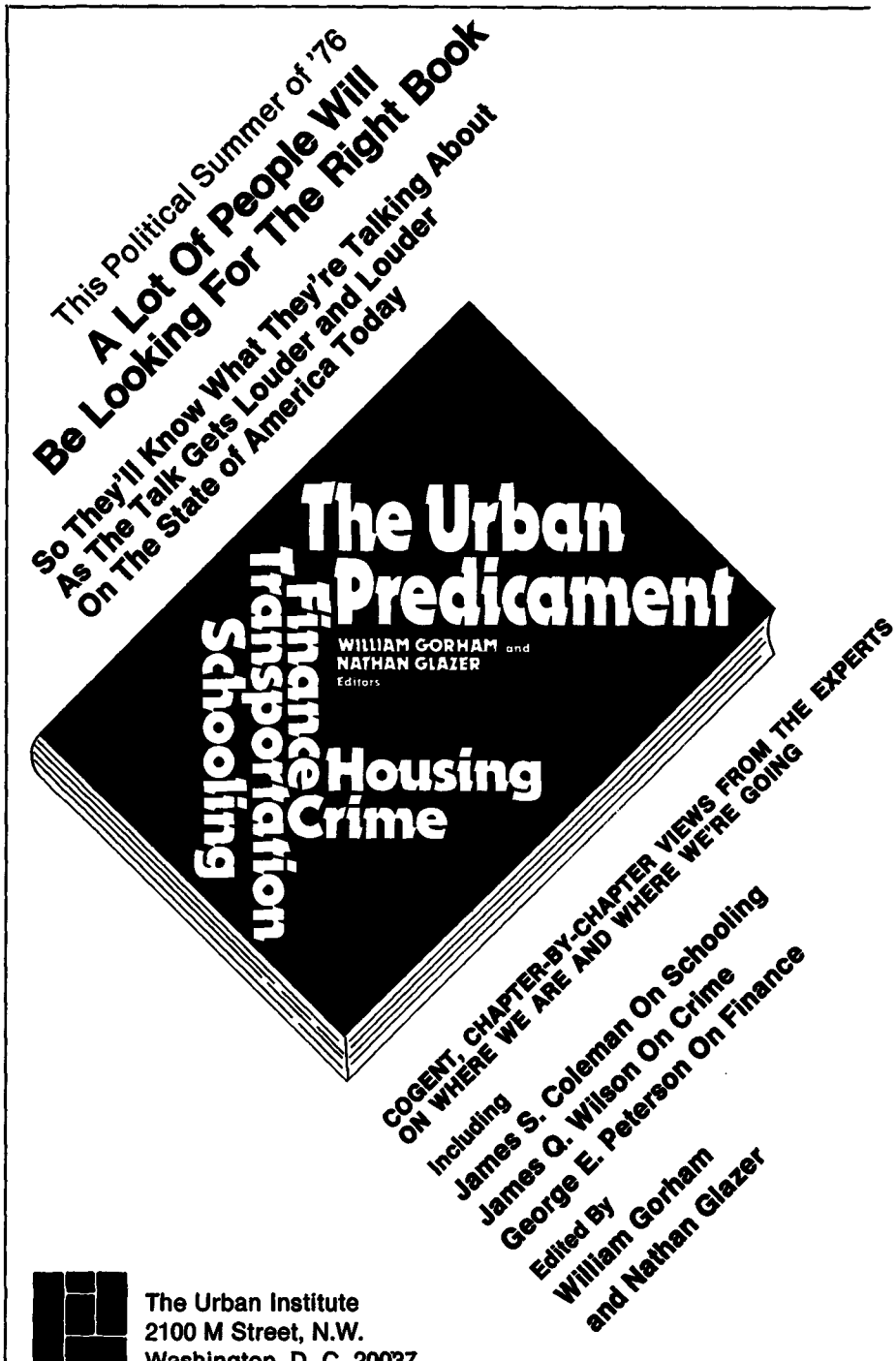
> Along with revisions of the territorial boundaries and the balance of power among nations that were made after the war, sexual relations were also restructured. New anatomical territorial boundaries were established for purposes of sexual attraction.

But what about World War II, one is tempted to ask, with its deliberate corporeal abuse? Kern does not satisfactorily answer the question of why this period of human history should have witnessed such massive and brutal experimentation on the body. Perhaps the question is unanswerable, but Kern also understates the horror of what culminated in the Nazi racial policy by his positive view of the Aryan physical-culture movement with its emphasis on beautiful bodies. As the author himself demonstrates, the German desire for healthy and attractive bodies was inseparable from the idea of German superiority and the suppression of outsiders.

Kern rightly notes the importance of Marx, Darwin, and Freud in treating the biological determinants of culture, but he largely ignores the question of sexual differentiation that all three addressed themselves to in one way or another. In view of the book's title, with its allusion to Freud's examination of the cultural consequences of anatomical distinctions, it seems that more might have been said about how differences in male and female anatomy do or do not affect individual destinies, and the roles played by men and women in society.

THE book ends on an optimistic note in keeping with the author's view that the history of the recent past has generally represented a steady progress toward greater and greater enlightenment, culminating in the extensive liberation of the present moment. Yet one might have thought Kern's own historical sense would have warned him about the illusory nature of such "progress." Permissive and repressive attitudes toward the body have alternated with a measure of regularity. For example, by Kern's own account the harshness of Victorian attitudes was preceded by the relative permissiveness of the 18th century; and history abounds in further examples of asceticism following in the wake of relative liberation. Are we ourselves on the verge of just such a reaction? For all the supposed liberation of the body today, we do not treat it any more kindly than the Victorians did, though our preoccupation is with spending, one might say, while theirs was with saving—neither of the two being designed to promote either bodily or mental health.

Kern writes that beginning with the Kinsey Report, "sexual performance acquired a measurable value unprecedented in the history of human relations. . . . Human sexuality became a competitive event subject to the same kinds of evaluations on the basis of speed, frequency, and endurance previously reserved for athletic events and machine production." But Kern does not comment on the dangers of such an attitude, nor does he point out that it simply turns the Protestant ethic upside-



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down: the 19th century believed in saving in order to invest; the 20th believes in spending in order to consume. Put otherwise, one might say that if the 19th-century bourgeoisie ignored the body, the 20th-century bourgeoisie, for whom the body is a machine and the orgasm simply another commodity, denies the spirit.

Curiously enough, even as the mass search for pleasure continues, contemporary literature as well as painting seems disenchanted with the body altogether. According to Kern, the progressive deterioration in the portrayal of the nude that we have been witnessing over the past few decades is a positive sign, and reveals a new, realistic acceptance of the body. But could it not just as easily be said to reveal a profound and as yet subterranean revulsion against it?

DeFunis and Beyond

DISCRIMINATING AGAINST DISCRIMINATION: PREFERENTIAL ADMISSIONS AND THE DEFUNIS CASE. By ROBERT M. O'NEIL. *Indiana University Press. 271 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM PETERSEN

MARCO DEFUNIS, JR., a white Jewish member of Phi Beta Kappa with a high B average in undergraduate courses, applied for admission to the University of Washington's law school in 1971. At the time of his first Law School Admission Test he was ill, and he scored only a mediocre 512. A year later, when he took the test again, he earned a 668, which would have placed him in the top 7 per cent of those taking the test. The latter score was discounted, however, since familiarity with the test presumably would have given him an advantage. Even so, on the basis of the revised score and his academic background, DeFunis should have been admitted, and when he was not, he sued the university, charging that the law school's admissions policy of giving preference to less qualified "minority" applicants discriminated against him. In the lower court he won and was admitted to the school, but on the university's appeal to the Washington Supreme Court he lost. In a second appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments but then refused to hand down a decision on the ground that, since the plaintiff was by that time in his last year of school, the case was moot.

Like the issue of reverse discrimination generally, *DeFunis* split supporters of civil rights down the middle. In all, about thirty massive amicus briefs were filed by more than fifty organizations, and the position of many of them could hardly have been predicted from their past associations. The National Association of Manufacturers and the AFL-CIO, for instance, were on the same side, in support of DeFunis. Among Jewish organizations, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League supported him, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the National Council of Jewish Women opposed him. Robert O'Neil, the author of *Discriminating Against Discrimination*, was chairman of the Council on Legal Education (CLEO) when it filed one more amicus brief against DeFunis. As would be expected, his account of the case is partisan, but it is not unduly biased.

O'Neil offers as good a case as can be made for preferential quotas, although not one that I find convincing. As he repeats several times, by the early 1970's only a small proportion of applicants were being admitted to the country's law schools. He therefore finds "simplistic" the egalitarian principle that the law should be color-blind, for "in a system that was oblivious to color, minority enrollments . . . might actually have declined during these years of the applications boom." Of all the "minority" applicants admitted to the University of Washington's law school in 1971, for example, only one would have been admitted without the exercise of reverse discrimination. Judged by their "probable first-year grade-point average," 74 of the 275 admitted that year were below DeFunis in academic qualifications.

O'Neil acknowledges that, given the tight market, it is not possible to admit some on a preferential basis without doing substantial harm to others. Certainly DeFunis and other whites were harmed; how much benefit did the others receive? According to a 1970 survey by the American Bar Association, of the 1,042 students admitted to law schools with "score deficiencies resulting from economic, social, or cultural circumstances and backgrounds," only 408, or about 38 per cent, graduated on schedule three years later. Of the remainder, 154 flunked out, 135 withdrew "voluntarily," 167 "disappeared," and 178 were still in school. And of the 408 who graduated on time, fewer than half passed the bar examination. In other words, in exchange for the more than a thousand "majority" persons denied places in law schools, there were about 200 "minority" lawyers. The figures are cited by O'Neil, but to him the record raises no question about whether the program is serving the country well.

THE main argument for reverse discrimination that such proponents as O'Neil proffer is that Something Must Be Done. I am inclined to agree, but I do not find it at all difficult to specify an alternative in line with American principles: those individuals (not groups) who suffer from lacks for which they are not responsible should be given the opportunity to make up their deficiencies—for example, by another year of pre-law schooling that would enable many of them, by a color-blind test, to get into law school and eventually to graduate. Such a program would also increase the number of blacks and others in professions and middle-class positions, but they would be fully qualified. Does it really benefit a "minority" community to furnish it with a full generation of poorly trained lawyers, inadequate doctors, and so on through the list of beneficiaries of America's new ethnic program? There is ample evidence that it does not.

WILLIAM PETERSEN, *whose review of Nathan Glazer's* Affirmative Discrimination *appeared last month, is Robert Lazarus Professor of Social Demography at Ohio State University.*

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